

# Under The Moons Of Mars

*A Women and Technology in "The Science Fiction Magazine"  
and the Women's Movement, 1912-1929*

*Edited and with a History by Sam Moskowitz*



# **Under The MOONS Of Mars**

A HISTORY AND ANTHOLOGY OF  
"THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE" IN THE  
MUNSEY MAGAZINES, 1912-1920

**Edited by Sam Moskowitz**

HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON  
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To Vern Coriell  
and the Burroughs Bibliophiles

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# PREFACE

THE PUBLICATION of *Under the Moons of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs in THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE in 1912 brought onto the magazine scene a writer whose instantaneous and phenomenal popularity shaped the policies of the early pulp magazines, making them the focal center of science fiction and inspiring a school of writers who made the scientific romance he wrote the most accepted form for more than twenty years. This book tells the history of the early years of that colorful writing cycle and puts it into perspective of the publishing world of the period. It also includes a selection from each of the most acclaimed who wrote in the tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

The history does not confine itself to the scientific romance, but gives a broad picture of science fiction in the Munsey magazines from their beginnings up through 1920. In the process it provides the first coordinated account of the early years of pulp-magazine publishing in the United States and covers the highpoints of the science fiction of the other pulps as well as the interrelationship of the policies of the various magazines.

The history is chronological, with appropriate flashbacks, and written to be read for entertainment as well as information. Yet it is in every sense a reference, for careful attention has been paid to precise accuracy of titles, dates, rates of payment, biographical matter, and factuality. The bulk of the information provided was obtained from primary sources and has not appeared elsewhere.

This volume is a continuation of the editor's *Science Fiction by Gaslight*:

*A History and Anthology of Science Fiction in the Popular Magazines, 1891-1911.* That volume showed how, with the advent of the ten-cent magazine aimed at the middle classes which originated in England with THE STRAND MAGAZINE, coupled with the arrival of a literary genius specializing in science fiction, H. G. Wells, science fiction became a familiar part of the popular magazines. Such publications as PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, COSMOPOLITAN, MUNSEY'S, MCCLURE'S, HAMPTON'S MAGAZINE, and THE METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE were *family* publications with something for every member and age group.

The strengthening of the advertising agencies, and their discovery that women either actually bought or influenced the buying of most items sold, found those magazines with strongest appeal to women receiving the most advertising. Because the advertisers wanted a better showcase for their merchandise, they also tended to favor publications with the larger-size page. Prior to World War I, the majority of the mass-circulation magazines were roughly about ten inches high and seven inches wide, the identical format of the pulp magazines. Of the big-circulation magazines, COSMOPOLITAN, HAMPTON'S, EVERYBODY'S, RED BOOK, and METROPOLITAN were among those who went to the larger size to accommodate the standard advertising plates of ten by eight inches. This usually meant a magazine eleven inches high and eight and one-half inches wide.

Change in size alone was not enough. To attract the maximum number of women readers, the magazine had to feature in its fiction as well as its articles the subject matter that most appealed to women. Science fiction rated very low on that list, since it was read primarily by men and teen-agers.

Yet the pulp magazines, which depended more and more upon the newsstand price for expenses and profits, and who were patronized primarily by men, went out of their way to present fiction that would also interest women. From the standpoint of entertainment, the pulp magazines up through 1920 were *family* magazines, and with few exceptions the big smooth-paper magazines, not excluding even THE SATURDAY EVENING POST and COLLIER'S, were *women's* magazines.

The pulps had always run science fiction, but they now became the primary source of it, and they found that such material had a very salutary effect on their sales. The pulp magazines that ran the most science fiction were those published by Frank A. Munsey and edited by Robert H. Davis. They both knew it pulled in the men and boys, but were afraid an excess might drive away the women. Edgar Rice Burroughs, with his 1912 novel *Under the Moons of Mars* gave them the answer they needed in a type of science fiction which emphasized exotic, color-



ful settings on other planets, little-explored areas of the earth, and unknown dimensions, and featured considerable dramatic action yet incorporated a romantic interest into the mix. Accuracy of the science was not important, but the elements of the story should provide the key to "escape."

The horrors of World War I caused readers to turn from the brutal realities of life and prefer fiction that permitted them to "get away from it all." Greatly encouraged by Munsey's editor Robert H. Davis, a score or more of writers began to specialize in a type of fiction best described as the "scientific romance." They all obtained their inspiration from the success formula of Edgar Rice Burroughs, but they were not all imitators. Actually they belonged to a "school" of writing and developed characteristics individually their own.

This book has collected selections from the most popular and successful practitioners of the "scientific romance" tradition of the Munsey magazines for the period 1912 to 1921. The final story, *The Blind Spot*, was purchased in 1920 and held more than a year before publication, but in the history it belongs in 1920. Every one of the writers represented in this collection was a "giant" in his day, and the fame of some of them has survived more than fifty years. The novel was the most popular form of the scientific romance, not only because an author needed space to build his new worlds, situations, and characters but also because the Munsey magazines specialized in running from four to seven serial novels an issue. This makes it necessary to reprint segments of certain of the stories instead of the complete work; but almost all of these segments are the beginnings of the novels (with the exception of the Burroughs which eliminates introductory chapters), are not cut or revised, and make up complete episodes in themselves.

The embarrassment of riches to be found in this volume owes a great deal to Hulbert Burroughs, one of the sons of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and to Robert M. Hodes, vice-president of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. Those two gentlemen permitted access to the files and records of the late Edgar Rice Burroughs, which have a historical value out of all proportion to the light they reflect upon him as an author, since they also provide a superb picture of the individuals and the business practices of the pulp magazines for which he wrote. Burroughs kept literally every scrap of paper sent him and even made written records of telephone calls which in any important way affected his business.

The volume of material available is staggering, and is providing the background for the first authorized biography of Edgar Rice Burroughs, now being written by Irwin Porges, noted for a previous biography of Edgar Allan Poe. This forthcoming Burroughs biography will almost certainly be the definitive work. Irwin Porges, who is the brother of

science-fiction author Arthur Porges, lives only a few miles from Tarzana, California, repository of the records. He also has the assistance of his wife, Cele, who has spent months carefully reading through the Burroughs archives and photocopying all relevant material. This is a monumental work in preparation, a milestone for Burroughs fans to look forward to, and despite the volume of material to peruse, Irwin Porges found time to check on some facts for this book which had not been located during the initial visit.

The problem for the editor of this book was to hunt down the materials needed, bid against other collectors for their possession, with no quarter shown by them, despite the fact that my motives involved basic research rather than acquisitiveness.

A number of dealers must be singled out for their understanding of my problem and for their remarkable ability to locate the magazines needed. First among them was certainly Richard H. Minter, of Eden, North Carolina, who has kept packages of rarities flowing in an unbroken stream for more than three years. A substantial quantity of needed periodicals was supplied by Thomas Altshuler, of Able-Man Book Shop, Hamtramck, Michigan; and some particularly difficult Edgar Rice Burroughs issues were sold to me by Camille Cazedessus, Jr., publisher of the Burroughs fan magazine *ERB-DOM*, Evergreen, Colorado.

The noblest figure of all, a man whose kindness must be listed as transcendental, was Harold Nevin Carey, a long-term buff from Phoenix, Arizona. He sent me, for shipping costs, roughly seven entire years of *ARGOSY*, which proved invaluable for reference.

A runner-up for commendation was author Sam Peeples, who offered to lend me runs of his almost mint *ALL-STORY WEEKLYS*. I felt that was too much to ask of any sincere collector and refused his magnificent gesture.

An old friend whose offer I did accept was Oswald Train, of Philadelphia, who owns one of the really fine fantasy collections in the country. He had volumes which provided invaluable background information on a number of the authors and editors referred to in this volume, information extraordinarily difficult to come by, so I gratefully accepted a short-term loan of those most useful.

Many of the truly outstanding collectors of science fiction and old pulp magazines are little known; among them is Lester Mayer, of Wellington, New Jersey, who was nothing if not generous in digging out nuggets of out-of-the-way information and lending items he felt might be of particular value. In my own city of Newark, New Jersey, Alan Howard, an Edgar Rice Burroughs supporter of long standing, was able to con-

tribute valuable assistance on several occasions, with a spontaneousness that was greatly appreciated.

It would be hard to equate the value of the cooperation extended by Alden H. Norton and Leo Lucke, who preside over the ancient files of Popular Publications (who purchased the Munsey chain), which include thousands of cards from the old Munsey magazines, replete with information going back to the turn of the century. Many hours of eyestrain and discovery were spent delving into those dusty records and coming up with nuggets of information which have been passed on to the readers of this book, giving it a guarantee of authenticity it could not otherwise have claimed.

The long years that Rhea Finkelstein has persevered at casting these manuscripts into a form ready-for-publication makes her a candidate for steadfastness that has all the earmarks of dedication.

Most important, Wallace Exman, imaginative editor of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, must be singled out for the clarity with which he has grasped the intent of this and previous of my books and carried them through in a manner which involved a minimum of compromise of objectives. This is especially important to me, for though the subject matter of this book has an obvious wide appeal, its intent goes beyond supplying a few hours of pleasant entertainment and nostalgia. In a very conscious sense it has been written and edited for those men and women I have the greatest affinity for—those people whose serious interest in this field has been its bastion and whose judgment I respect—the experts and long-term advocates of science fiction and Edgar Rice Burroughs, who above all I would not want to disappoint.

*September 1969*

Sam Moskowitz  
Newark, New Jersey



**The All-Story Ma**

*February-July, 1912*

**V.V.W.V.V.V.**

# **UNDER THE MOONS OF MARS**

**by Edgar Rice Burroughs**

^g Edgar Rice Burroughs, one of the world's most famous authors, was born September 1, 1875, in Chicago. He received his early education in the public schools and spent some time in his early teens in Idaho, where he became a good horseman. Dismissed from Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, after a single term, he was sent to a military academy at Orchard Lake, Michigan. Completing his senior year, he failed to pass a test for admission to West Point and returned to Orchard Lake as "assistant commandant, tactical officer, and cavalry instructor," finally enlisting in the United States Cavalry the spring of 1896.

A release from the Cavalry was obtained by his father, who was president of the American Storage Battery Company in Chicago. He enlisted in the Army as a private instead of entering business with his father, but after a year a heart condition developed, and a discharge was arranged. His brothers set him up with a stationery store in Pocatello, Idaho, but he had to sell within a year. Three years with his father's battery business enabled him to marry, even though his salary was only twenty dollars a week.

Tiring of the business, he packed up and went west, to fail at mining with his brothers in Idaho, and then took a job as a railway cop in Salt Lake City. His wife permitted him to auction off their furniture in order to raise the money to return to Chicago. Burroughs then took a variety of selling jobs, bluffed his way into an accounting position, situated himself with Sears, Roebuck for two years, and finally went into his own mail-order business, selling aluminum pots and pans. It was during this time that he wrote courses on how to be a successful businessman.

A brother, Harry, secured a position for him placing ads in the pulp magazines for a patent-medicine cure for alcoholism called Alcola. This position

lasted only two months, but it had great significance, because it acquainted Burroughs with the contents of periodicals like THE ARGOSY and THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, which published and presumably paid for fiction.

It was to these he turned in sheer and utter desperation as he failed at job after job and business venture after business venture. He had written business advice, doggerel, little stories for children (which he never tried to have published), but in concentrating on the scientific romance as in *Under the Moons of Mars*, he found his metier. Burroughs took pride in his work, even when he seemed to concede some of the unkind inferences of his critics.

He said repeatedly in interviews that he turned to writing only to feed his family. The facts make it difficult to argue with that assertion. A thirty-seven-year-old failure at the time he sold his first novel, penniless, with two children to support, and a third on the way, his behavior when money began to come in could have provided substance for a sermon. He purchased a fine home for his wife and children and spent virtually all of his spare time with the family, chauffeuring them around in the big automobiles he had always promised to buy when he struck it rich. His tolerance of small children as they wandered in and out of his study while he was trying to write was positively saintly. He drove a hard bargain in selling the products of his imagination, but in the incredible mass of his papers which his family opened to his biographer, Irwin Porges, it was impossible to find a hint of scandal. People who worked for him speak of him in hushed supernal whispers. His primary goal in writing appeared to be to provide security for his family. Millions of his old readers remember him with kindly nostalgia, and millions of new ones seem unable to detect the glaring flaws that the critics attributed to his work.

It is obvious that *Tarzan of the Apes* has become one of the literary treasures of America, and if one is to trust to the reality of recent events, it will be bracketed by a good many of his other works for some generations to come.

To set the tone of this book, a substantial segment from Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Under the Moons of Mars*, the landmark novel that popularized the vogue for the scientific romance, leads off this compendium.

A long prologue telling of Captain John Carter's Southern background and training, his mysterious death and entombment in a vault that could be opened *only from the inside* as told by his "friend," Edgar Rice Burroughs, is omitted. Deleted, as well, are the first two chapters telling of John Carter's return from the Civil War, and his try at prospecting for gold with another former Confederate officer. His partner is killed by Indians and John Carter takes refuge in a cave and lays down to rest. Faced by the threat of the return of the Indians and also by mysterious moaning sounds in the rear of the cave, with an effort of the will he finds his spirit separated from his body. Stepping out of the cave into the night, he sees in the spangled heavens the red dot of Mars. He thinks: "Mars, the god of war, and for me the fighting man, it had always held the power of irresistible enchantment." Then relates: "As I gazed at it on that far-gone night it seemed to call across the unthinkable void, to lure me to it, to draw me as a lodestone attracts a particle of iron.

"My longing was beyond the power of opposition; I closed my eyes, stretched out my arms toward the god of my vocation and felt myself drawn with the suddenness of thought through the trackless immensity of space. There was an instant of extreme cold and utter darkness."

At that point, the section that follows opens and we are given the fascinating background of the Martian world, a world that would engage the imagination of the author for the next thirty-eight years of his life. This can be read as a complete section in itself and the story can be found in its entirety under the title of *A Princess of Mars*.

## 1. MY ADVENT ON MARS

I OPENED MY eyes upon a strange and weird landscape. I knew that I was on Mars; not once did I question either my sanity or my wakefulness. I was not asleep, no need for pinching here; my inner consciousness told me as plainly that I was upon Mars as your conscious mind tells you that you are upon Earth. You do not question the fact; neither did I.

I found myself lying prone upon a bed of yellowish, moss-like vegetation which stretched around me in all directions for interminable miles. I seemed to be lying in a deep, circular basin, along the outer verge of which I could distinguish the irregularities of low hills.

It was midday, the sun was shining full upon me and the heat of it was rather intense upon my naked body, yet no greater than would have been true under similar conditions on an Arizona desert. Here and there were slight outcroppings of quartz-bearing rock which glistened in the sunlight; and a little to my left, perhaps a hundred yards, appeared a low, walled enclosure about four feet in height. No water, and no other vegetation than the moss was in evidence, and as I was somewhat thirsty I determined to do a little exploring.

Springing to my feet I received my first Martian surprise, for the effort, which on Earth would have brought me standing upright, carried me into the Martian air to the height of about three yards. I alighted softly upon the ground, however, without appreciable shock or jar. Now commenced a series of evolutions which even then seemed ludicrous in the extreme. I found that I must learn to walk all over again, as the muscular exertion which carried me easily and safely upon Earth played strange antics with me upon Mars.

Instead of progressing in a sane and dignified manner, my attempts to walk resulted in a variety of hops which took me clear of the ground a

couple of feet at each step and landed me sprawling upon my face or back at the end of each second or third hop. My muscles, perfectly attuned and accustomed to the force of gravity on Earth, played the mischief with me in attempting for the first time to cope with the lesser gravitation and lower air pressure on Mars.

I was determined, however, to explore the low structure which was the only evidence of habitation in sight, and so I hit upon the unique plan of reverting to first principles in locomotion, creeping. I did fairly well at this and in a few moments had reached the low, encircling wall of the enclosure.

There appeared to be no doors or windows upon the side nearest me, but as the wall was but about four feet high I cautiously gained my feet and peered over the top upon the strangest sight it had ever been given me to see.

The roof of the enclosure was of solid glass about four or five inches in thickness, and beneath this were several hundred large eggs, perfectly round and snowy white. The eggs were nearly uniform in size being about two and one-half feet in diameter.

Five or six had already hatched and the grotesque caricatures which sat blinking in the sunlight were enough to cause me to doubt my sanity. They seemed mostly head, with little scrawny bodies, long necks and six legs, or, as I afterward learned, two legs and two arms, with an intermediary pair of limbs which could be used at will either as arms or legs. Their eyes were set at the extreme sides of their heads a trifle above the center and protruded in such a manner that they could be directed either forward or back and also independently of each other, thus permitting this queer animal to look in any direction, or in two directions at once, without the necessity of turning the head.

The ears, which were slightly above the eyes and closer together, were small, cup-shaped antennae, protruding not more than an inch on these young specimens. Their noses were but longitudinal slits in the center of their faces, midway between their mouths and ears.

There was no hair on their bodies, which were of a very light yellowish-green color. In the adults, as I was to learn quite soon, this color deepens to an olive green and is darker in the male than in the female. Further, the heads of the adults are not so out of proportion to their bodies as in the case of the young.

The iris of the eyes is blood red, as in Albinos, while the pupil is dark. The eyeball itself is very white, as are the teeth. These latter add a most ferocious appearance to an otherwise fearsome and terrible countenance, as the lower tusks curve upward to sharp points which end about where the eyes of earthly human beings are located. The whiteness of the teeth is



not that of ivory, but of the snowiest and most gleaming of china. Against the dark background of their olive skins their tusks stand out in a most striking manner, making these weapons present a singularly formidable appearance.

Most of these details I noted later, for I was given but little time to speculate on the wonders of my new discovery. I had seen that the eggs were in the process of hatching, and as I stood watching the hideous little monsters break from their shells I failed to note the approach of a score of full-grown Martians from behind me.

Coming, as they did, over the soft and soundless moss, which covers practically the entire surface of Mars with the exception of the frozen areas at the poles and the scattered cultivated districts, they might have captured me easily, but their intentions were far more sinister. It was the rattling of the accouterments of the foremost warrior which warned me.

On such a little thing my life hung that I often marvel that I escaped so easily. Had not the rifle of the leader of the party swung from its fastenings beside his saddle in such a way as to strike against the butt of his great metal shod spear, I should have snuffed out without ever knowing that death was near me. But the little sound caused me to turn, and there upon me, not ten feet from my breast, was the point of that huge spear, a spear forty feet long, tipped with gleaming metal, and held low at the side of a mounted replica of the little devils I had been watching.

But how puny and harmless they now looked beside this huge and terrific incarnation of hate, of vengeance and of death. The man himself, for such I may call him, was fully fifteen feet in height and, on Earth, would have weighed some four hundred pounds. He sat his mount as we sit a horse, grasping the animal's barrel with his lower limbs, while the hands of his two right arms held his immense spear low at the side of his mount; his two left arms were outstretched laterally to help preserve his balance, the thing he rode having neither bridle or reins of any description for guidance.

And his mount! How can earthly words describe it! It towered ten feet at the shoulder; had four legs on either side; a broad flat tail, larger at the tip than at the root, and which it held straight out behind while running; a gaping mouth which split its head from its snout to its long, massive neck.

Like its master, it was entirely devoid of hair, but was of a dark slate color and exceeding smooth and glossy. Its belly was white, and its legs shaded from the slate of its shoulders and hips to a vivid yellow at the feet. The feet themselves were heavily padded and nailless, which fact had also contributed to the noiselessness of their approach, and, in common with a multiplicity of legs, is a characteristic feature of the fauna of Mars. The highest type of man and one other animal, the only mammal

existing on Mars, alone have well-formed nails, and there are absolutely no hoofed animals in existence there.

Behind this first charging demon trailed nineteen others, similar in all respects, but, as I learned later, bearing individual characteristics peculiar to themselves; precisely as no two of us are identical although we are all cast in a similar mold. This picture, or rather materialized nightmare, which I have described at length, made but one terrible and swift impression on me as I turned to meet it.

Unarmed and naked as I was, the first law of nature manifested itself in the only possible solution of my immediate problem, and that was to get out of the vicinity of the point of the charging spear. Consequently I gave a very earthly and at the same time superhuman leap to reach the top of the Martian incubator, for such I had determined it must be.

My effort was crowned with a success which appalled me no less than it seemed to surprise the Martian warriors, for it carried me fully thirty feet into the air and landed me a hundred feet from my pursuers and on the opposite side of the enclosure.

I alighted upon the soft moss easily and without mishap, and turning saw my enemies lined up along the further wall. Some were surveying me with expressions which I afterward discovered marked extreme astonishment, and the others were evidently satisfying themselves that I had not molested their young.

They were conversing together in low tones, and gesticulating and pointing toward me. Their discovery that I had not harmed the little Martians, and that I was unarmed, must have caused them to look upon me with less ferocity; but, as I was to learn later, the thing which weighed most in my favor was my exhibition of hurdling.

While the Martians are immense, their bones are very large and they are muscled only in proportion to the gravitation which they must overcome. The result is that they are infinitely less agile and less powerful, in proportion to their weight, than an Earth man, and I doubt that were one of them suddenly to be transported to Earth he could lift his own weight from the ground; in fact, I am convinced that he could not do so.

My feat then was as marvelous upon Mars as it would have been upon Earth, and from desiring to annihilate me they suddenly looked upon me as a wonderful discovery to be captured and exhibited among their fellows.

The respite my unexpected agility had given me permitted me to formulate plans for the immediate future and to note more closely the appearance of the warriors, for I could not disassociate these people in my mind from those other warriors who, only the day before, had been pursuing me.

I noted that each was armed with several other weapons in addition to the huge spear which I have described. The weapon which caused me to decide against an attempt at escape by flight was what was evidently a rifle of some description, and which I felt, for some reason, they were peculiarly efficient in handling.

These rifles were of a white metal stocked with wood, which I learned later was a very light and intensely hard growth much prized on Mars, and entirely unknown to us denizens of Earth. The metal of the barrel is an alloy composed principally of aluminum and steel which they have learned to temper to a hardness far exceeding that of the steel with which we are familiar. The weight of these rifles is comparatively little, and with the small caliber, explosive, radium projectiles which they use, and the great length of the barrel, they are deadly in the extreme and at ranges which would be unthinkable on Earth. The theoretic effective radius of this rifle is three hundred miles, but the best they can do in actual service when equipped with their wireless finders and sighters is but a trifle over two hundred miles.

This is quite far enough to imbue me with great respect for the Martian firearm, and some telepathic force must have warned me against an attempt to escape in broad daylight from under the muzzles of twenty of these death-dealing machines.

The Martians, after conversing for a short time, turned and rode away in the direction from which they had come, leaving one of their number alone by the enclosure. When they had covered perhaps two hundred yards they halted, and turning their mounts toward us sat watching the warrior by the enclosure.

He was the one whose spear had so nearly transfixed me, and was evidently the leader of the band, as I had noted that they seemed to have moved to their present position at his direction. When his force had come to a halt he dismounted, threw down his spear and small arms, and came around the end of the incubator toward me, entirely unarmed and as naked as I, except for the ornaments strapped upon his head, limbs, and breast.

When he was within about fifty feet of me he unclasped an enormous metal armlet, and holding it toward me in the open palm of his hand, addressed me in a clear, resonant voice, but in a language, it is needless to say, I could not understand. He then stopped as though waiting for my reply, pricking up his antennae-like ears and cocking his strange-looking eyes still further toward me.

As the silence became painful I concluded to hazard a little conversation on my own part, as I had guessed that he was making overtures of peace. The throwing down of his weapons and the withdrawing of his

troop before his advance toward me would have signified a peaceful mission anywhere on Earth, so why not, then, on Mars!

Placing my hand over my heart I bowed low to the Martian and explained to him that while I did not understand his language, his actions spoke for the peace and friendship that at the present moment were most dear to my heart. Of course I might have been a babbling brook for all the intelligence my speech carried to him, but he understood the action with which I immediately followed my words.

Stretching my hand toward him, I advanced and took the armlet from his open palm, clasping it about my arm above the elbow; smiled at him and stood waiting. His wide mouth spread into an answering smile, and locking one of his intermediary arms in mine we turned and walked back toward his mount. At the same time he motioned his followers to advance. They started toward us on a wild run, but were checked by a signal from him. Evidently he feared that were I to be really frightened again I might jump entirely out of the landscape.

He exchanged a few words with his men, motioned to me that I would ride behind one of them, and then mounted his own animal. The fellow designated reached down two or three hands and lifted me up behind him on the glossy back of his mount, where I hung on as best I could by the belts and straps which held the Martian's weapons and ornaments.

The entire cavalcade then turned and galloped away toward the range of hills in the distance.

## 2. A PRISONER

WE HAD GONE perhaps ten miles when the ground began to rise very rapidly. We were, as I was later to learn, nearing the edge of one of Mars' long-dead seas, in the bottom of which my encounter with the Martians had taken place.

In a short time we gained the foot of the mountains, and after traversing a narrow gorge came to an open valley, at the far extremity of which was a low table land upon which I beheld an enormous city. Toward this we galloped, entering it by what appeared to be a ruined roadway leading out from the city, but only to the edge of the table land, where it ended abruptly in a flight of broad steps.

Upon closer observation I saw as we passed them that the buildings were deserted, and while not greatly decayed had the appearance of not having been tenanted for years, possibly for ages. Toward the center of the city was a large plaza, and upon this and in the buildings immediately

surrounding it were camped some nine or ten hundred creatures of the same breed as my captors, for such I now considered them despite the suave manner in which I had been trapped.

With the exception of their ornaments all were naked. The women varied in appearance but little from the men, except that their tusks were much larger in proportion to their height, in some instances curving nearly to their high-set ears. Their bodies were smaller and lighter in color, and their fingers and toes bore the rudiments of nails, which were entirely lacking among the males. The adult females ranged in height from ten to twelve feet.

The children were light in color, even lighter than the women, and all looked precisely alike to me, except that some were taller than others; older, I presumed.

I saw no signs of extreme age among them, nor is there any appreciable difference in their appearance from the age of maturity, about forty, until, at about the age of one thousand years, they go voluntarily upon their last strange pilgrimage down the river Iss, which leads no living Martian knows whither and from whose bosom no Martian has ever returned, or would be allowed to live did he return after once embarking upon its cold, dark waters.

Only about one Martian in a thousand dies of sickness or disease, and possibly about twenty take the voluntary pilgrimage. The other nine hundred and seventy-nine die violent deaths in duels, in hunting, in aviation and in war; but perhaps by far the greatest death loss comes during the age of childhood, when vast numbers of the little Martians fall victims to the great white apes of Mars.

The average life expectancy of a Martian after the age of maturity is about three hundred years, but would be nearer the one-thousand mark were it not for the various means leading to violent death. Owing to the waning resources of the planet it evidently became necessary to counteract the increasing longevity which their remarkable skill in therapeutics and surgery produced, and so human life has come to be considered but lightly on Mars, as is evidenced by their dangerous sports and the almost continual warfare between the various communities.

There are other and natural causes tending toward a diminution of population, but nothing contributes so greatly to this end as the fact that no male or female Martian is voluntarily without a weapon of destruction.

As we neared the plaza and my presence was discovered we were immediately surrounded by hundreds of the creatures who seemed anxious to pluck me from my seat behind my guard. A word from the leader of the party stilled their clamor, and we proceeded at a trot across the plaza to the entrance of as magnificent an edifice as mortal eye has rested upon.

The building was low, but covered an enormous area. It was constructed of gleaming white marble inlaid with gold and brilliant stones which sparkled and scintillated in the sunlight. The main entrance was some hundred feet in width and projected from the building proper to form a huge canopy above the entrance hall. There was no stairway, but a gentle incline to the first floor of the building opened into an enormous chamber encircled by galleries.

On the floor of this chamber, which was dotted with highly carved wooden desks and chairs, were assembled about forty or fifty male Martians around the steps of a rostrum. On the platform proper squatted an enormous warrior heavily loaded with metal ornaments, gay-colored feathers and beautifully wrought leather trappings ingeniously set with precious stones. From his shoulders depended a short cape of white fur lined with brilliant scarlet silk.

What struck me as most remarkable about this assemblage and the hall in which they were congregated was the fact that the creatures were entirely out of proportion to the desks, chairs, and other furnishings; these being of a size adapted to human beings such as I, whereas the great bulks of the Martians could scarcely have squeezed into the chairs, nor was there room beneath the desks for their long legs. Evidently, then, there were other denizens of Mars than the wild and grotesque creatures into whose hands I had fallen, but the evidences of extreme antiquity which showed all around me indicated that these buildings might have belonged to some long-extinct and forgotten race in the dim antiquity of Mars.

Our party had halted at the entrance to the building, and at a sign from the leader I had been lowered to the ground. Again locking his arm in mine, we had proceeded into the audience chamber. There were few formalities observed in approaching the Martian chieftain. My captor merely strode up to the rostrum, the others making way for him as he advanced. The chieftain rose to his feet and uttered the name of my escort who, in turn, halted and repeated the name of the ruler followed by his title.

At the time, this ceremony and the words they uttered meant nothing to me, but later I came to know that this was the customary greeting between green Martians. Had the men been strangers, and therefore unable to exchange names, they would have silently exchanged ornaments, had their missions been peaceful—otherwise they would have exchanged shots, or have fought out their introduction with some other of their various weapons.

My captor, whose name was Tars Tarkas, was virtually the vice-

chieftain of the community, and a man of great ability as a statesman and warrior. He evidently explained briefly the incidents connected with his expedition, including my capture, and when he had concluded the chieftain addressed me at some length.

I replied in our good old English tongue merely to convince him that neither of us could understand the other; but I noticed that when I smiled slightly on concluding, he did likewise. This fact, and the similar occurrence during my first talk with Tars Tarkas, convinced me that we had at least something in common; the ability to smile, therefore to laugh; denoting a sense of humor. But I was to learn that the Martian smile is merely perfunctory, and that the Martian laugh is a thing to cause strong men to blanch in horror.

The ideas of humor among the green men of Mars are widely at variance with our conceptions of incitants to merriment. The death agonies of a fellow being are, to these strange creatures, provocative of the wildest hilarity, while their chief form of commonest amusement is to inflict death on their prisoners of war in various ingenious and horrible ways.

The assembled warriors and chieftains examined me closely, feeling my muscles and the texture of my skin. The principal chieftain then evidently signified a desire to see me perform, and, motioning me to follow, he started with Tars Tarkas for the open plaza.

Now, I had made no attempt to walk, since my first signal failure, except while tightly grasping Tars Tarkas' arm, and so now I went skipping and flitting about among the desks and chairs like some monstrous grasshopper. After bruising myself severely, much to the amusement of the Martians, I again had recourse to creeping, but this did not suit them and I was roughly jerked to my feet by a towering fellow who had laughed most heartily at my misfortunes.

As he banged me down upon my feet his face was bent close to mine and I did the only thing a gentleman might do under the circumstances of brutality, boorishness, and lack of consideration for a stranger's rights; I swung my fist squarely to his jaw and he went down like a felled ox. As he sank to the floor I wheeled around with my back toward the nearest desk, expecting to be overwhelmed by the vengeance of his fellows, but determined to give them as good a battle as the unequal odds would permit before I gave up my life.

My fears were groundless, however, as the other Martians, at first struck dumb with wonderment, finally broke into wild peals of laughter and applause. I did not recognize the applause as such, but later, when I had become acquainted with their customs, I learned that I had won what they seldom accord, a manifestation of approbation.

The fellow whom I had struck lay where he had fallen, nor did any of his mates approach him. Tars Tarkas advanced toward me, holding out one of his arms, and we thus proceeded to the plaza without further mishap. I did not, of course, know the reason for which we had come to the open, but I was not long in being enlightened. They first repeated the word "sak" a number of times, and then Tars Tarkas made several jumps, repeating the same word before each leap; then, turning to me, he said, "sak!" I saw what they were after, and gathering myself together I "sakked" with such marvelous success that I cleared a good hundred and fifty feet; nor did I, this time, lose my equilibrium, but landed squarely upon my feet without falling. I then returned by easy jumps of twenty-five or thirty feet to the little group of warriors.

My exhibition had been witnessed by several hundred lesser Martians, and they immediately broke into demands for a repetition, which the chieftain then ordered me to make; but I was both hungry and thirsty, and determined on the spot that my only method of salvation was to demand the consideration from these creatures which they evidently would not voluntarily accord. I therefore ignored the repeated commands to "sak," and each time they were made I motioned to my mouth and rubbed my stomach.

Tars Tarkas and the chief exchanged a few words, and the former, calling to a young female among the throng, gave her some instructions and motioned me to accompany her. I grasped her proffered arm and together we crossed the plaza toward a large building on the far side.

My fair companion was about eight feet tall, having just arrived at maturity, but not yet to her full height. She was of a light olive-green color, with a smooth, glossy hide. Her name, as I afterward learned, was Sola, and she belonged to the retinue of Tars Tarkas. She conducted me to a spacious chamber in one of the buildings fronting on the plaza, and which, from the litter of silks and furs upon the floor, I took to be the sleeping quarters of several of the natives.

The room was well lighted by a number of large windows and was beautifully decorated with mural paintings and mosaics, but upon all there seemed to rest that indefinable touch of the finger of antiquity which convinced me that the architects and builders of these wondrous creations had nothing in common with the crude half-brutes which now occupied them.

Sola motioned to me to be seated upon a pile of silks near the center of the room, and, turning, made a peculiar hissing sound, as though signaling to someone in an adjoining room. In response to her call I obtained my first sight of a new Martian wonder. It waddled in on its ten short legs, and squatted down before the girl like an obedient puppy.



The thing was about the size of a Shetland pony, but its head bore a slight resemblance to that of a frog, except that the jaws were equipped with three rows of long, sharp tusks.

### 3. I ELUDE MY WATCH DOG

SOLA STARED INTO the brute's wicked-looking eyes, muttered a word or two of command, pointed to me, and left the chamber. I could not but wonder what this ferocious-looking monstrosity might do when left alone in such close proximity to such a relatively tender morsel of meat; but my fears were groundless, as the beast, after surveying me intently for a moment, crossed the room to the only exit which led to the street, and lay down full length across the threshold.

This was my first experience with a Martian watch dog, but it was destined not to be my last, for this fellow guarded me carefully during the time I remained a captive among these green men; twice saving my life, and never voluntarily being away from me a moment.

While Sola was away I took occasion to examine more minutely the room in which I found myself captive. The mural painting depicted scenes of rare and wonderful beauty: mountains, rivers, lake, ocean, meadow, trees and flowers, winding roadways, sun-kissed gardens—scenes which might have portrayed earthly views but for the different colorings of the vegetation. The work had evidently been wrought by a master hand, so subtle the atmosphere, so perfect the technique; yet nowhere was there a representation of a living animal, either human or brute, by which I could guess at the likeness of these other and perhaps extinct denizens of Mars.

While I was allowing my fancy to run riot in wild conjecture on the possible explanation of the strange anomalies which I had so far met with on Mars, Sola returned bearing both food and drink. These she placed on the floor beside me, and seating herself a short ways off regarded me intently. The food consisted of about a pound of some solid substance of the consistency of cheese and almost tasteless, while the liquid was apparently milk from some animal. It was not unpleasant to the taste, though slightly acid, and I learned in a short time to prize it very highly. It came, as I later discovered, not from an animal, as there is only one mammal on Mars and that one very rare indeed, but from a large plant which grows practically without water, but seems to distill its plentiful supply of milk from the products of the soil, the moisture of the air, and the rays of the sun. A single plant of this species will give eight or ten quarts of milk per day.

After I had eaten I was greatly invigorated, but feeling the need of rest I stretched out upon the silks and was soon asleep. I must have slept several hours, as it was dark when I awoke, and I was very cold. I noticed that someone had thrown a fur over me, but it had become partially dislodged and in the darkness I could not see to replace it. Suddenly a hand reached out and pulled the fur over me, shortly afterwards adding another to my covering.

I presumed that my watchful guardian was Sola, nor was I wrong. This girl alone, among all the green Martians with whom I came in contact, disclosed characteristics of sympathy, kindliness, and affection; her ministrations to my bodily wants were unfailing, and her solicitous care saved me from much suffering and many hardships.

As I was to learn, the Martian nights are extremely cold, and as there is practically no twilight or dawn, the changes in temperature are sudden and most uncomfortable, as are the transitions from brilliant daylight to darkness. The nights are either brilliantly illumined or very dark, for if neither of the two moons of Mars happens to be in the sky almost total darkness results, since the lack of atmosphere, or, rather, the very thin atmosphere, fails to diffuse the starlight to any great extent; on the other hand, if both of the moons are in the heavens at night the surface of the ground is brightly illuminated.

Both of Mars' moons are vastly nearer her than is our moon to Earth; the nearer moon being but about five thousand miles distant, while the further is but little more than fourteen thousand miles away, against the nearly one-quarter million miles which separate us from our moon. The nearer moon of Mars makes a complete revolution around the planet in a little over seven and one-half hours, so that she may be seen hurtling through the sky like some huge meteor two or three times each night, revealing all her phases during each transit of the heavens.

The further moon revolves about Mars in something over thirty and one-quarter hours, and with her sister satellite makes a nocturnal Martian scene one of splendid and weird grandeur. And it is well that nature has so graciously and abundantly lighted the Martian night, for the green men of Mars, being a nomadic race without high intellectual development, have but crude means for artificial lighting, depending principally upon torches, a kind of candle, and a peculiar oil lamp which generates a gas and burns without a wick.

This last device produces an intensely brilliant far-reaching white light, but as the natural oil which it requires can only be obtained by mining in one of several widely separated and remote localities it is seldom used by these creatures whose only thought is for today, and whose hatred for manual labor has kept them in a semi-barbaric state for countless ages.

After Sola had replenished my coverings I again slept, nor did I awaken until daylight. The other occupants of the room, five in number, were all females, and they were still sleeping, piled high with a motley array of silks and furs. Across the threshold lay stretched the sleepless guardian brute, just as I had last seen him on the preceding day; apparently he had not moved a muscle; his eyes were fairly glued upon me, and I fell to wondering just what might befall me should I endeavor to escape.

I have ever been prone to seek adventure and to investigate and experiment where wiser men would have left well enough alone. It therefore now occurred to me that the surest way of learning the exact attitude of this beast toward me would be to attempt to leave the room. I felt fairly secure in my belief that I could escape him should he pursue me once I was outside the building, for I had begun to take great pride in my ability as a jumper. Furthermore, I could see from the shortness of his legs that the brute himself was no jumper and probably no runner.

Slowly and carefully, therefore, I gained my feet, only to see that my watcher did the same; cautiously I advanced toward him, finding that by moving with a shuffling gait I could retain my balance as well as make reasonably rapid progress. As I neared the brute he backed cautiously away from me, and when I had reached the open he moved to one side to let me pass. He then fell in behind me and followed about ten paces in my rear as I made my way along the deserted street.

Evidently his mission was to protect me only, I thought, but when we reached the edge of the city he suddenly sprang before me, uttering strange sounds and baring his ugly and ferocious tusks. Thinking to have some amusement at his expense, I rushed toward him, and when almost upon him sprang into the air, alighting far beyond him and away from the city. He wheeled instantly and charged me with the most appalling speed I have ever beheld. I had thought his short legs a bar to swiftness, but had he been coursing with greyhounds the latter would have appeared as though asleep on a door mat. As I was to learn, this is the fleetest animal on Mars, and owing to its intelligence, loyalty, and ferocity is used in hunting, in war, and as the protector of the Martian man.

I quickly saw that I would have difficulty in escaping the fangs of the beast on a straightaway course, and so I met his charge by doubling in my tracks and leaping over him as he was almost upon me. This maneuver gave me a considerable advantage, and I was able to reach the city quite a bit ahead of him, and as he came tearing after me I jumped for a window about thirty feet from the ground in the face of one of the buildings overlooking the valley.

Grasping the sill I pulled myself up to a sitting posture without looking into the building, and gazed down at the baffled animal beneath me. My

exultation was short-lived, however, for scarcely had I gained a secure seat upon the sill than a huge hand grasped me by the neck from behind and dragged me violently into the room. Here I was thrown upon my back, and beheld standing over me a colossal ape-like creature, white and hairless except for an enormous shock of bristly hair upon its head.

#### 4. A FIGHT THAT WON FRIENDS

THE THING, which more nearly resembled our earthly men than it did the Martians I had seen, held me pinioned to the ground with one huge foot, while it jabbered and gesticulated at some answering creature behind me. This other, which was evidently its mate, soon came toward us, bearing a mighty stone cudgel with which it evidently intended to brain me.

The creatures were about ten or fifteen feet tall, standing erect, and had, like the green Martians, an intermediary set of arms or legs, midway between their upper and lower limbs. Their eyes were close together and non-protruding; their ears were high set, but more laterally located than those of the Martians, while their snouts and teeth were strikingly like those of our African gorilla. Altogether they were not unlovely when viewed in comparison with the green Martians.

The cudgel was swinging in the arc which ended upon my upturned face when a bolt of myriad-legged horror hurled itself through the doorway full upon the breast of my executioner. With a shriek of fear the ape which held me leaped through the open window, but its mate closed in a terrific death struggle with my preserver, which was nothing less than my faithful watch-thing; I cannot bring myself to call so hideous a creature a dog.

As quickly as possible I gained my feet and backing against the wall I witnessed such a battle as it is vouchsafed few beings to see. The strength, agility, and blind ferocity of these two creatures is approached by nothing known to earthly man. My beast had an advantage in his first hold, having sunk his mighty fangs far into the breast of his adversary; but the great arms and paws of the ape, backed by muscles far transcending those of the Martian men I had seen, had locked the throat of my guardian and slowly were choking out his life, and bending back his head and neck upon his body, where I momentarily expected the former to fall limp at the end of a broken neck.

In accomplishing this the ape was tearing away the entire front of its breast, which was held in the vise-like grip of the powerful jaws. Back and forth upon the floor they rolled, neither one emitting a sound of fear

or pain. Presently I saw the great eyes of my beast bulging completely from their sockets and blood flowing from its nostrils. That he was weakening perceptibly was evident, but so also was the ape, whose struggles were growing momentarily less.

Suddenly I came to myself and, with that strange instinct which seems ever to prompt me to my duty, I seized the cudgel, which had fallen to the floor at the commencement of the battle, and swinging it with all the power of my earthly arms I crashed it full upon the head of the ape, crushing his skull as though it had been an eggshell.

Scarcely had the blow descended when I was confronted with a new danger. The ape's mate, recovered from its first shock of terror, had returned to the scene of the encounter by way of the interior of the building. I glimpsed him just before he reached the doorway and the sight of him, now roaring as he perceived his lifeless fellow stretched upon the floor, and frothing at the mouth, in the extremity of his rage, filled me, I must confess, with dire forebodings.

I am ever willing to stand and fight when the odds are not too overwhelmingly against me, but in this instance I perceived neither glory nor profit in pitting my relatively puny strength against the iron muscles and brutal ferocity of this enraged denizen of an unknown world; in fact, the only outcome of such an encounter, so far as I might be concerned, seemed sudden death.

I was standing near the window and I knew that once in the street I might gain the plaza and safety before the creature could overtake me; at least there was a chance for safety in flight, against almost certain death should I remain and fight however desperately.

It is true I held the cudgel, but what could I do with it against his four great arms? Even should I break one of them with my first blow, for I figured that he would attempt to ward off the cudgel, he could reach out and annihilate me with the others before I could recover for a second attack.

In the instant that these thoughts passed through my mind I had turned to make for the window, but my eyes alighting on the form of my erstwhile guardian threw all thoughts of flight to the four winds. He lay gasping upon the floor of the chamber, his great eyes fastened upon me in what seemed a pitiful appeal for protection. I could not withstand that look, nor could I, on second thought, have deserted my rescuer without giving as good an account of myself in his behalf as he had in mine.

Without more ado, therefore, I turned to meet the charge of the infuriated bull ape. He was now too close upon me for the cudgel to prove of any effective assistance, so I merely threw it as heavily as I could at his advancing bulk. It struck him just below the knees, eliciting a howl of pain

and rage, and so throwing him off balance that he lunged full upon me with arms wide-stretched to ease his fall.

Again, as on the preceding day, I had recourse to earthly tactics, and swinging my right fist full upon the point of his chin I followed it with a smashing left to the pit of his stomach. The effect was marvelous, for, as I lightly sidestepped, after delivering the second blow, he reeled and fell upon the floor doubled up with pain and gasping for wind. Leaping over his prostrate body, I seized the cudgel and finished the monster before he could regain his feet.

As I delivered the blow a low laugh rang out behind me, and, turning, I beheld Tars Tarkas, Sola, and three or four warriors standing in the doorway of the chamber. As my eyes met theirs I was, for the second time, the recipient of their zealously guarded applause.

My absence had been noted by Sola on her awakening, and she had quickly informed Tars Tarkas, who had set out immediately with a handful of warriors to search for me. As they had approached the limits of the city they had witnessed the actions of the bull ape as he bolted into the building, frothing with rage.

They had followed immediately behind him, thinking it barely possible that his actions might prove a clew to my whereabouts and had witnessed my short but decisive battle with him. This encounter, together with my set-to with the Martian warrior on the previous day and my feats of jumping placed me upon a high pinnacle in their regard. Evidently devoid of all the finer sentiments of friendship, love, or affection, these people fairly worship physical prowess and bravery, and nothing is too good for the object of their adoration as long as he maintains his position by repeated examples of his skill, strength, and courage.

Sola, who had accompanied the searching party of her own volition, was the only one of the Martians whose face had not been twisted in laughter as I battled for my life. She, on the contrary, was sober with apparent solicitude and, as soon as I had finished the monster, rushed to me and carefully examined my body for possible wounds or injuries. Satisfying herself that I had come off unscathed she smiled quietly, and, taking my hand, started toward the door of the chamber.

Tars Tarkas and the other warriors had entered and were standing over the now rapidly reviving brute which had saved my life, and whose life I, in turn, had rescued. They seemed to be deep in argument, and finally one of them addressed me, but remembering my ignorance of his language turned back to Tars Tarkas, who, with a word and gesture, gave some command to the fellow and turned to follow us from the room.

There seemed something menacing in their attitude toward my beast, and I hesitated to leave until I had learned the outcome. It was well I did

so, for the warrior drew an evil-looking pistol from its holster and was on the point of putting an end to the creature when I sprang forward and struck up his arm. The bullet striking the wooden casing of the window exploded, blowing a hole completely through the wood and masonry.

I then knelt down beside the fearsome-looking thing, and raising it to its feet motioned for it to follow me. The looks of surprise which my actions elicited from the Martians were ludicrous; they could not understand, except in a feeble and childish way, such attributes as gratitude and compassion. The warrior whose gun I had struck up looked inquiringly at Tars Tarkas, but the latter signed that I be left to my own devices, and so we returned to the plaza with my great beast following close at heel, and Sola grasping me tightly by the arm.

I had at least two friends on Mars; a young woman who watched over me with motherly solicitude, and a dumb brute which, as I later came to know, held in its poor ugly carcass more love, more loyalty, more gratitude than could have been found in the entire five million green Martians who rove the deserted cities and dead sea bottoms of Mars.

## 5. CHILD-RAISING ON MARS

AFTER A BREAKFAST, which was an exact replica of the meal of the preceding day and an index of practically every meal which followed while I was with the green men of Mars, Sola escorted me to the plaza, where I found the entire community engaged in watching or helping at the harnessing of huge mastodonian animals to great three-wheeled chariots. There were about two hundred and fifty of these vehicles, each drawn by a single animal, any one of which, from their appearance, might easily have drawn the entire wagon train when fully loaded.

The chariots themselves were large, commodious, and gorgeously decorated. In each was seated a female Martian loaded with ornaments of metal, with jewels and silks and furs, and upon the back of each of the beasts which drew the chariots was perched a young Martian driver. Like the animals upon which the warriors were mounted, the heavier draft animals wore neither bit nor bridle, but were guided entirely by telepathic means.

This power is wonderfully developed in all Martians, and accounts largely for the simplicity of their language and the relatively few spoken words exchanged even in long conversations. It is the universal language of Mars, through the medium of which the higher and lower animals of this world of paradoxes are able to communicate to a greater or less extent, depending upon the intellectual sphere of the species and the development of the individual.

As the cavalcade took up the line of march in single file, Sola dragged me into an empty chariot and we proceeded with the procession toward the point by which I had entered the city the day before. At the head of the caravan rode some two hundred warriors, five abreast, and a like number brought up the rear, while twenty-five or thirty outriders flanked us on either side.

Every one but myself—men, women, and children—was heavily armed, and at the tail of each chariot trotted a Martian hound, my own beast following closely behind ours; in fact, the faithful creature never left me voluntarily during the entire ten years I spent on Mars. Our way led out across the little valley before the city, through the hills, and down into the dead sea bottom which I had traversed on my journey from the incubator to the plaza. The incubator, as it proved, was the terminal point of our journey this day, and, as the entire cavalcade broke into a mad gallop as soon as we reached the level expanse of sea bottom, we were soon within sight of our goal.

On reaching it the chariots were parked with military precision on the four sides of the enclosure, and half a score of warriors, headed by the enormous chieftain, and including Tars Tarkas and several other lesser chiefs, dismounted and advanced toward it. I could see Tars Tarkas explaining something to the principal chieftain, whose name, by the way, was, as nearly as I can translate it into English, Lorquas Ptomel, Jed; jed being his title.

I was soon apprised of the subject of their conversation, as, calling to Sola, Tars Tarkas signed for her to send me to him. I had by this time mastered the intricacies of walking under Martian conditions, and quickly responding to his command I advanced to the side of the incubator where the warriors stood.

As I reached their side a glance showed me that all but a very few eggs had hatched, the incubator being fairly alive with the hideous little devils. They ranged in height from three to four feet, and were moving restlessly about the enclosure as though searching for food.

As I came to a halt before him, Tars Tarkas pointed over the incubator and said, "Sak." I saw that he wanted me to repeat my performance of yesterday for the edification of Lorquas Ptomel, and, as I must confess that my prowess gave me no little satisfaction, I responded quickly, leaping entirely over the parked chariots on the far side of the incubator. As I returned, Lorquas Ptomel grunted something at me, and turning to his warriors gave a few words of command relative to the incubator. They paid no further attention to me and I was thus permitted to remain close and watch their operations, which consisted of breaking an opening in the



wall of the incubator large enough to permit the exit of the young Martians.

On either side of this opening the women and the younger Martians, both male and female, formed two solid walls leading out through the chariots and quite away into the plain beyond. Between these walls the little Martians scampered, wild as deer; being permitted to run the full length of the aisle, where they were captured one at a time by the women and older children; the last in the line capturing the first little one to reach the end of the gauntlet, her opposite in the line capturing the second, and so on until all the little fellows had left the enclosure and been appropriated by some youth or female. As the women caught the young they fell out of line and returned to their respective chariots, while those who fell into the hands of the young men were later turned over to some of the women.

I saw that the ceremony, if it could be dignified by such a name, was over, and seeking out Sola I found her in our chariot with a hideous little creature held tightly in her arms.

The work of rearing young, green Martians consists solely in teaching them to talk, and to use the weapons of warfare with which they are loaded down from the very first year of their lives. Coming from eggs in which they have lain for five years, the period of incubation, they step forth into the world perfectly developed except in size. Entirely unknown to their own mothers, who, in turn, would have difficulty in pointing out the fathers with any degree of accuracy, they are the common children of the community, and their education devolves upon the females who chance to capture them as they leave the incubator.

Their foster mothers may not even have had an egg in the incubator, as was the case with Sola, who had not commenced to lay, until less than a year before she became the mother of another woman's offspring. But this counts for little among the green Martians, as parental and filial love is as unknown to them as it is common among us. I believe this horrible system which has been carried on for ages is the direct cause of the loss of all the finer feelings and higher humanitarian instincts among these poor creatures. From birth they know no father or mother love, they know not the meaning of the word home; they are taught that they are only suffered to live until they can demonstrate by their physique and ferocity that they are fit to live. Should they prove deformed or defective in any way they are promptly shot; nor do they see a tear shed for a single one of the many cruel hardships they pass through from earliest infancy.

I do not mean that the adult Martians are unnecessarily or intentionally cruel to the young, but theirs is a hard and pitiless struggle for

existence upon a dying planet, the natural resources of which have dwindled to a point where the support of each additional life means an added tax upon the community into which it is thrown.

By careful selection they rear only the hardiest specimens of each species, and with almost supernatural foresight they regulate the birth rate to merely offset the loss by death. Each adult Martian female brings forth about thirteen eggs each year, and those which meet the size, weight, and specific gravity tests are hidden in the recesses of some subterranean vault where the temperature is too low for incubation. Every year these eggs are carefully examined by a council of twenty chieftains, and all but about one hundred of the most perfect are destroyed out of each yearly supply. At the end of five years about five hundred almost perfect eggs have been chosen from the thousands brought forth. These are then placed in the almost air-tight incubators to be hatched by the sun's rays after a period of another five years. The hatching which we had witnessed today was a fairly representative event of its kind, all but about one per cent of the eggs hatching in two days. If the remaining eggs ever hatched we knew nothing of the fate of the little Martians. They were not wanted, as their offspring might inherit and transmit the tendency to prolonged incubation, and thus upset the system which had maintained for ages and which permits the adult Martians to figure the proper time for return to the incubators, almost to an hour.

The incubators are built in remote fastnesses, where there is little or no likelihood of their being discovered by other tribes. The result of such a catastrophe would mean no children in the community for another five years. I was later to witness the results of the discovery of an alien incubator.

The community, of which the green Martians with whom my lot was cast formed a part, was composed of some thirty thousand souls. They roamed an enormous tract of arid and semi-arid land between forty and eighty degrees south latitude, and bounded on the east and west by two large fertile tracts. Their headquarters lay in the southwest corner of this district, near the crossing of two of the so-called Martian canals.

As the incubator had been placed far north of their own territory in a supposedly uninhabited and unfrequented area, we had before us a tremendous journey, concerning which I, of course, knew nothing.

After our return to the dead city I passed several days in comparative idleness. On the day following our return all the warriors had ridden forth early in the morning and had not returned until just before darkness fell. As I later learned, they had been to the subterranean vaults in which the eggs were kept and had transported them to the incubator, which they had then walled up for another five years, and which, in all probability, would not be visited again during that period.

The vaults which hid the eggs until they were ready for the incubator were located many miles south of the incubator, and would be visited yearly by the council of twenty chieftains. Why they did not arrange to build their vaults and incubators nearer home has always been a mystery to me, and, like many other Martian mysteries, unsolved and unsolvable by earthly reasoning and customs.

Sola's duties were now doubled, as she was compelled to care for the young Martian as well as for me, but neither one of us required much attention, and as we were both about equally advanced in Martian education, Sola took it upon herself to train us together.

Her prize consisted in a male about four feet tall, very strong and physically perfect; also, he learned quickly, and we had considerable amusement, at least I did, over the keen rivalry we displayed. The Martian language, as I have said, is extremely simple, and in a week I could make all my wants known and understand nearly everything that was said to me. Likewise, under Sola's tutelage, I developed my telepathic powers so that I shortly could sense practically everything that went on around me.

What surprised Sola most in me was that while I could catch telepathic messages easily from others, and often when they were not intended for me, no one could read a jot from my mind under any circumstances. At first this vexed me, but later I was very glad of it, as it gave me an undoubted advantage over the Martians.

## 6. A FAIR CAPTIVE FROM THE SKY

THE THIRD DAY after the incubator ceremony we set forth toward home, but scarcely had the head of the procession debouched into the open ground before the city than orders were given for an immediate and hasty return. As though trained for years in this particular evolution, the green Martians melted like mist into the spacious doorways of the nearby buildings, until, in less than three minutes, the entire cavalcade of chariots, mastodons and mounted warriors was nowhere to be seen.

Sola and I had entered a building upon the front of the city, in fact, the same one in which I had had my encounter with the apes, and, wishing to see what had caused the sudden retreat, I mounted to an upper floor and peered from the window out over the valley and the hills beyond; and there I saw the cause of their sudden scurrying to cover. A huge craft, long, low, and gray-painted, swung slowly over the crest of the nearest hill. Following it came another, and another, and another, until twenty of them, swinging low above the ground, sailed slowly and majestically toward us.

Each carried a strange banner swung from stem to stern above the upper works, and upon the prow of each was painted some odd device that gleamed in the sunlight and showed plainly even at the distance at which we were from the vessels. I could see figures crowding the forward decks and upper works of the air craft. Whether they had discovered us or simply were looking at the deserted city I could not say, but in any event they received a rude reception, for suddenly and without warning the green Martian warriors fired a terrific volley from the windows of the buildings facing the little valley across which the great ships were so peacefully advancing.

Instantly the scene changed as by magic; the foremost vessel swung broadside toward us, and bringing her guns into play returned our fire, at the same time moving parallel to our front for a short distance and then turning back with the evident intention of completing a great circle which would bring her up to position once more opposite our firing line; the other vessels followed in her wake, each one opening upon us as she swung into position. Our own fire never diminished, and I doubt if twenty-five per cent of our shots went wild. It had never been given me to see such deadly accuracy of aim, and it seemed as though a little figure on one of the craft dropped at the explosion of each bullet, while the banners and upper works dissolved in spurts of flame as the irresistible projectiles of our warriors mowed through them.

The fire from the vessels was most ineffectual, owing, as I afterward learned, to the unexpected suddenness of the first volley, which caught the ships' crews entirely unprepared and the sighting apparatus of the guns unprotected from the deadly aim of our warriors.

It seems that each green warrior has certain objective points for his fire under relatively identical circumstances of warfare. For example, a proportion of them, always the best marksmen, direct their fire entirely upon the wireless finding and sighting apparatus of the big guns of an attacking naval force; another detail attends to the smaller guns in the same way; others pick off the gunners; still others the officers; while certain other quotas concentrate their attention upon the other members of the crew, upon the upper works, and upon the steering gear and propellers.

Twenty minutes after the first volley the great fleet swung trailing off in the direction from which it had first appeared. Several of the craft were limping perceptibly, and seemed but barely under the control of their depleted crews. Their fire had ceased entirely and all their energies seemed focused upon escape. Our warriors then rushed up to the roofs of the buildings which we occupied and followed the retreating armada with a continuous fusillade of deadly fire.

One by one, however, the ships managed to dip below the crests of the outlying hills until only one barely moving craft was in sight. This had received the brunt of our fire and seemed to be entirely unmanned, as not a moving figure was visible upon her decks. Slowly she swung from her course, circling back toward us in an erratic and pitiful manner. Instantly the warriors ceased firing, for it was quite apparent that the vessel was entirely helpless, and, far from being in a position to inflict harm upon us, she could not even control herself sufficiently to escape.

As she neared the city the warriors rushed out upon the plain to meet her, but it was evident that she was still too high for them to hope to reach her decks. From my vantage point in the window I could see the bodies of her crew strewn about, although I could not make out what manner of creatures they might be. Not a sign of life was manifest upon her as she drifted slowly with the light breeze in a southeasterly direction.

She was drifting some fifty feet above the ground, followed by all but some hundred of the warriors who had been ordered back to the roofs to cover the possibility of a return of the fleet, or of reinforcements. It soon became evident that she would strike the face of the buildings about a mile south of our position, and as I watched the progress of the chase I saw a number of warriors gallop ahead, dismount and enter the building she seemed destined to touch.

As the craft neared the building, and just before she struck, the Martian warriors swarmed upon her from the windows, and with their great spears eased the shock of the collision, and in a few moments they had thrown out grappling hooks and the big boat was being hauled to ground by their fellows below.

After making her fast, they swarmed the sides and searched the vessel from stem to stern. I could see them examining the dead sailors, evidently for signs of life, and presently a party of them appeared from below dragging a little figure among them. The creature was considerably less than half as tall as the green Martian warriors, and from my balcony I could see that it walked erect upon two legs and surmised that it was some new and strange Martian monstrosity with which I had not as yet become acquainted.

They removed their prisoner to the ground and then commenced a systematic rifling of the vessel. This operation required several hours, during which time a number of chariots were requisitioned to transport the loot, which consisted in arms, ammunition, silks, furs, jewels, strangely carved stone vessels, and a quantity of solid foods and liquids, including many casks of water, the first I had seen since my advent upon Mars.

After the last load had been removed the warriors made lines fast to the craft and towed her far out into the valley in a southwesterly

direction. A few of them then boarded her and were busily engaged in what appeared, from my distant position, as the emptying of the contents of various carboys upon the dead bodies of the sailors and over the decks and works of the vessel.

This operation concluded, they hastily clambered over her sides, sliding down the guy ropes to the ground. The last warrior to leave the deck turned and threw something back upon the vessel, waiting an instant to note the outcome of his act. As a faint spurt of flame rose from the point where the missile struck he swung over the side and was quickly upon the ground. Scarcely had he alighted than the the guy ropes were simultaneously released, and the great warship, lightened by the removal of the loot, soared majestically into the air, her decks and upper works a mass of roaring flames.

Slowly she drifted to the southeast, rising higher and higher as the flames ate away her wooden parts and diminished the weight upon her. Ascending to the roof of the building I watched her for hours, until finally she was lost in the dim vistas of the distance. The sight was awe-inspiring in the extreme as one contemplated this mighty floating funeral pyre, drifting unguided and unmanned through the lonely wastes of the Martian heavens; a derelict of death and destruction, typifying the life story of these strange and ferocious creatures into whose unfriendly hands fate had carried it.

Much depressed, and, to me, unaccountably so, I slowly descended to the street. The scene I had witnessed seemed to mark the defeat and annihilation of the forces of a kindred people, rather than the routing by our green warriors of a horde of similar, though unfriendly, creatures. I could not fathom the seeming hallucination, nor could I free myself from it; but somewhere in the innermost recesses of my soul I felt a strange yearning toward these unknown foemen, and a mighty hope surged through me that the fleet would return and demand a reckoning from the green warriors who had so ruthlessly and wantonly attacked it.

Close at my heel, in his now accustomed place, followed Woola, the hound, and as I emerged upon the street Sola rushed up to me as though I had been the object of some search on her part. The cavalcade was returning to the plaza, the homeward march having been given up for that day; nor, in fact, was it recommenced for more than a week, owing to the fear of a return attack by the air craft.

Lorquas Ptomel was too astute an old warrior to be caught upon the open plains with a caravan of chariots and children, and so we remained at the deserted city until the danger seemed passed.

As Sola and I entered the plaza a sight met my eyes which filled my whole being with a great surge of mingled hope, fear, exultation, and

depression, and yet most dominant was a subtle sense of relief and happiness; for just as we neared the throng of Martians I caught a glimpse of the prisoner from the battle craft who was being roughly dragged into a nearby building by a couple of green Martian females.

And the sight which met my eyes was that of a slender, girlish figure, similar in every detail to the earthly women of my past life. She did not see me at first, but just as she was disappearing through the portal of the building which was to be her prison she turned, and her eyes met mine. Her face was oval and beautiful in the extreme, her every feature was finely chiseled and exquisite, her eyes large and lustrous and her head surmounted by a mass of coal black, waving hair, caught loosely into a strange yet becoming coiffure. Her skin was of a light reddish copper color, against which the crimson glow of her cheeks and the ruby of her beautifully molded lips shone with a strangely enhancing effect.

She was as destitute of clothes as the green Martians who accompanied her; indeed, save for her highly wrought ornaments she was entirely naked, nor could any apparel have enhanced the beauty of her perfect and symmetrical figure.

As her gaze rested on me her eyes opened wide in astonishment, and she made a little sign with her free hand; a sign which I did not, of course, understand. Just a moment we gazed upon each other, and then the look of hope and renewed courage which had glorified her face as she discovered me, faded into one of utter dejection, mingled with loathing and contempt. I realized I had not answered her signal, and ignorant as I was of Martian customs, I intuitively felt that she had made an appeal for succor and protection which my unfortunate ignorance had prevented me from answering. And then she was dragged out of my sight into the depths of the deserted edifice.

## 7. I LEARN THE LANGUAGE

AS I CAME back to myself I glanced at Sola, who had witnessed this encounter and I was surprised to note a strange expression upon her usually expressionless countenance. What her thoughts were I did not know, for as yet I had learned but little of the Martian tongue; enough only to suffice for my daily needs.

As I reached the doorway of our building a strange surprise awaited me. A warrior approached bearing the arms, ornaments, and full accouterments of his kind. These he presented to me with a few unintelligible words, and a bearing at once respectful and menacing.

Later, Sola, with the aid of several of the other women, remodeled the

trappings to fit my lesser proportions, and after they completed the work I went about garbed in all the panoply of war.

From then on Sola instructed me in the mysteries of the various weapons, and with the Martian young I spent several hours each day practicing upon the plaza. I was not yet proficient with all the weapons, but my great familiarity with similar earthly weapons made me an unusually apt pupil, and I progressed in a very satisfactory manner.

The training of myself and the young Martians was conducted solely by the women, who not only attend to the education of the young in the arts of individual defense and offense, but are also the artisans who produce every manufactured article wrought by the green Martians. They make the powder, the cartridges, the firearms; in fact everything of value is produced by the females. In time of actual warfare they form a part of the reserves, and when the necessity arises fight with even greater intelligence and ferocity than the men.

The men are trained in the higher branches of the art of war; in strategy and the maneuvering of large bodies of troops. They make the laws as they are needed; a new law for each emergency. They are unfettered by precedent in the administration of justice. Customs have been handed down by ages of repetition, but the punishment for ignoring a custom is a matter for individual treatment by a jury of the culprit's peers, and I may say that justice seldom misses fire, but seems rather to rule in inverse ratio to the ascendancy of law. In one respect at least the Martians are a happy people; they have no lawyers.

I did not see the prisoner again for several days subsequent to our first encounter, and then only to catch a fleeting glimpse of her as she was being conducted to the great audience chamber where I had had my first meeting with Lorquas Ptomel. I could not but note the unnecessary harshness and brutality with which her guards treated her; so different from the almost maternal kindness which Sola manifested toward me, and the respectful attitude of the few green Martians who took the trouble to notice me at all.

I had observed on the two occasions when I had seen her that the prisoner exchanged words with her guards, and this convinced me that they spoke, or at least could make themselves understood by a common language. With this added incentive I nearly drove Sola distracted by my importunities to hasten on my education, and within a few more days I had mastered the Martian tongue sufficiently well to enable me to carry on a passable conversation and to fully understand practically all that I heard.

At this time our sleeping quarters were occupied by three or four females and a couple of the recently hatched young, besides Sola and her



youthful ward, myself, and Woola the hound. After they had retired for the night it was customary for the adults to carry on a desultory conversation for a short time before lapsing into sleep, and now that I could understand their language I was always a keen listener, although I never proffered any remarks myself.

On the night following the prisoner's visit to the audience chamber the conversation finally fell upon this subject, and I was all ears on the instant. I had feared to question Sola relative to the beautiful captive, as I could not but recall the strange expression I had noted upon her face after my first encounter with the prisoner. That it denoted jealousy I could not say, and yet, judging all things by mundane standards as I still did, I felt it safer to affect indifference in the matter until I learned more surely Sola's attitude toward the object of my solicitude.

Sarkoja, one of the older women who shared our domicile, had been present at the audience as one of the captive's guards, and it was toward her the questioners turned.

"When," asked one of the women, "will we enjoy the death throes of the red one? or does Lorquas Ptomel, Jed, intend holding her for ransom?"

"They have decided to carry her with us back to Thark, and exhibit her last agonies at the great games before Tal Hajus," replied Sarkoja.

"What will be the manner of her going out?" inquired Sola. "She is very small and very beautiful; I had hoped that they would hold her for ransom."

Sarkoja and the other women grunted angrily at this evidence of weakness on the part of Sola.

"It is sad, Sola, that you were not born a million years ago," snapped Sarkoja, "when all the hollows of the land were filled with water, and the peoples were as soft as the stuff they sailed upon. In our day we have progressed to a point where such sentiments mark weakness and atavism. It will not be well for you to permit Tars Tarkas to learn that you hold such degenerate sentiments, as I doubt that he would care to entrust such as you with the grave responsibilities of maternity."

"I see nothing wrong with my expression of interest in this red woman," retorted Sola. "She has never harmed us, nor would she should we have fallen into her hands. It is only the men of her kind who war upon us, and I have ever thought that their attitude toward us is but the reflection of theirs toward them. They live at peace with all their fellows, except when they call upon them to make war, while we are at peace with none; never warring among our own kind as well as upon the red men, and even in our own communities the individuals fight amongst themselves. Oh, it is one continual, awful period of bloodshed from the time we break the shell until we gladly embrace the bosom of the river of mystery,

the dark and ancient Iss which carries us to an unknown, but at least no more frightful and terrible existence! Fortunate indeed is he who meets his end in an early death. Say what you please to Tars Tarkas, he can mete out no worse fate to me than a continuation of the horrible existence we are forced to lead in this life."

This wild outbreak on the part of Sola so greatly surprised and shocked the other women, that, after a few words of general reprimand, they all lapsed into silence and were soon asleep. One thing the episode had accomplished was to assure me of Sola's friendliness toward the poor girl, and also to convince me that I had been extremely fortunate in falling into her hands rather than those of some of the other females. I knew that she was fond of me, and now that I had discovered that she hated cruelty and barbarity I was confident that I could depend upon her to aid me and the girl captive to escape, provided of course that such a thing was within the range of possibilities.

I did not even know that there were any better conditions to escape to, but I was more than willing to take my chances among people fashioned after my own mold rather than to remain longer among the hideous and bloodthirsty green men of Mars. But where to go, and how, was as much of a puzzle to me as the age-old search for the spring of eternal life has been to earthly men since the beginning of time.

I decided that at the first opportunity I would take Sola into my confidence and openly ask her to aid me, and with this resolution strong upon me I turned among my silks and furs and slept the dreamless and refreshing sleep of Mars.

## 8. CHAMPION AND CHIEF

EARLY THE NEXT morning I was astir. Considerable freedom was allowed me, as Sola had informed me that so long as I did not attempt to leave the city I was free to go and come as I pleased. She had warned me, however, against venturing forth unarmed, as this city, like all other deserted metropolises of an ancient Martian civilization, was peopled by the great white apes of my second day's adventure.

In advising me that I must not leave the boundaries of the city Sola had explained that Woola would prevent this anyway should I attempt it, and she warned me most urgently not to arouse his fierce nature by ignoring his warnings should I venture too close to the forbidden territory. His nature was such, she said, that he would bring me back into the city dead or alive should I persist in opposing him; "preferably dead," she added.

On this morning I had chosen a new street to explore when suddenly I found myself at the limits of the city. Before me were low hills pierced by narrow and inviting ravines. I longed to explore the country before me, and, like the pioneer stock from which I sprang, to view what the landscape beyond the encircling hills might disclose from the summits which shut out my view.

It also occurred to me that this would prove an excellent opportunity to test the qualities of Woola. I was convinced that the brute loved me; I had seen more evidences of affection in him than in any other Martian animal, man or beast, and I was sure that gratitude for the acts that had twice saved his life would more than outweigh his loyalty to the duty imposed upon him by cruel and loveless masters.

As I approached the boundary line Woola ran anxiously before me, and thrust his body against my legs. His expression was pleading rather than ferocious, nor did he bare his great tusks or utter his fearful guttural warnings. Denied the friendship and companionship of my kind, I had developed considerable affection for Woola and Sola, for the normal earthly man must have some outlet for his natural affections, and so I decided upon an appeal to a like instinct in this great brute, sure I would not be disappointed.

I had never petted nor fondled him, but now I sat upon the ground and putting my arms around his heavy neck I stroked and coaxed him, talking in my newly acquired Martian tongue as I would have to my hound at home, as I would have talked to any other friend among the lower animals. His response to my manifestation of affection was remarkable to a degree; he stretched his great mouth to its full width, baring the entire expanse of his upper rows of tusks and wrinkling his snout until his great eyes were almost hidden by the folds of flesh. If you have ever seen a collie smile you may have some idea of Woola's facial distortion.

He threw himself upon his back and fairly wallowed at my feet; jumped up and sprang upon me, rolling me upon the ground by his great weight; then wriggling and squirming around me like a playful puppy presenting its back for the petting it craves. I could not resist the ludicrousness of the spectacle, and holding my sides I rocked back and forth in the first laughter which had passed my lips in many days.

My laughter frightened Woola, his antics ceased and he crawled pitifully toward me, poking his ugly head far into my lap; and then I remembered what laughter signified on Mars—torture, suffering, death. Quieting myself, I rubbed the poor old fellow's head and back, talked to him for a few minutes, and then in an authoritative tone commanded him to follow me, and arising started for the hills.

There was no further question of authority between us; Woola was my devoted slave from that moment hence, and I his only and undisputed master. My walk to the hills occupied but a few minutes, and I found nothing of particular interest to reward me. Numerous brilliantly colored and strangely formed wild flowers dotted the ravines and from the summit of the first hill I saw still other hills stretching off toward the north, and rising, one range above another, until lost in mountains of quite respectable dimensions; though I afterward found that only a few peaks on all Mars exceed four thousand feet in height; the suggestion of magnitude was merely relative.

My morning's walk had been large with importance to me for it had resulted in a perfect understanding with Woola, upon whom Tars Tarkas relied for my safe keeping. I now knew that while theoretically a prisoner I was virtually free, and I hastened to regain the city limits before the defections of Woola could be discovered by his erstwhile masters. The adventure decided me never again to leave the limits of my prescribed stamping grounds until I was ready to venture forth for good and all, as it would certainly result in a curtailment of my liberties, as well as the probable death of Woola, were we to be discovered.

On regaining the plaza I had my third glimpse of the captive girl. She was standing with her guards before the entrance to the audience chamber, and as I approached she gave me one haughty glance and turned her back full upon me. The act was so womanly, so earthly womanly, that though it stung my pride it also warmed my heart with a feeling of companionship; it was good to know that someone else on Mars besides myself had human instincts of a civilized order, even though the manifestation of them was so painful and mortifying.

Had a green Martian woman desired to show dislike or contempt she would, in all likelihood, have done it with a sword thrust or a movement of her trigger finger; but as their sentiments are mostly atrophied it would have required a serious injury to have aroused such passions in them. Sola, let me add, was an exception; I never saw her perform a cruel or uncouth act, or fail in uniform kindness and good nature. She was indeed, as her fellow Martian had said of her, an atavism; a dear and precious reversion to a former type of loved and loving ancestor.

Seeing that the prisoner seemed the center of attraction I halted to view the proceedings. I had not long to wait for presently Lorquas Ptomel and his retinue of chieftains approached the building and, signing the guards to follow with the prisoner, entered the audience chamber. Realizing that I was a somewhat favored character, and also convinced that the warriors did not know of my proficiency in their language, as I had pleaded with Sola to keep this a secret on the grounds that I did not

wish to be forced to talk with the men until I had perfectly mastered the Martian tongue, I chanced an attempt to enter the audience chamber and listen to the proceedings.

The council squatted upon the steps of the rostrum, while below them stood the prisoner and her two guards. I saw that one of the women was Sarkoja, and thus understood how she had been present at the hearing of the preceding day, the results of which she had reported to the occupants of our dormitory last night. Her attitude toward the captive was most harsh and brutal. When she held her, she sunk her rudimentary nails into the poor girl's flesh, or twisted her arm in a most painful manner. When it was necessary to move from one spot to another she either jerked her roughly, or pushed her headlong before her. She seemed to be venting upon this poor defenseless creature all the hatred, cruelty, ferocity, and spite of her nine hundred years, backed by unguessable ages of fierce and brutal ancestors.

The other woman was less cruel because she was entirely indifferent; if the prisoner had been left to her alone, and fortunately she was at night, she would have received no harsh treatment, nor, by the same token would she have received any attention at all.

As Lorquas Ptomel raised his eyes to address the prisoner they fell on me and he turned to Tars Tarkas with a word, and gesture of impatience. Tars Tarkas made some reply which I could not catch, but which caused Lorquas Ptomel to smile; after which they paid no further attention to me.

"What is your name?" asked Lorquas Ptomel, addressing the prisoner.

"Dejah Thoris, daughter of Mors Kajak of Helium."

"And the nature of your expedition?" he continued.

"It was a purely scientific research party sent out by my father's father, the Jeddak of Helium, to rechart the air currents, and to take atmospheric density tests," replied the fair prisoner, in a low, well-modulated voice.

"We were unprepared for battle," she continued, "as we were on a peaceful mission, as our banners and the colors of our craft denoted. The work we were doing was as much in your interests as in ours, for you know full well that were it not for our labors and the fruits of our scientific operations there would not be enough air or water on Mars to support a single human life. For ages we have maintained the air and water supply at practically the same point without an appreciable loss, and we have done this in the face of the brutal and ignorant interference of your green men.

"Why, oh, why will you not learn to live in amity with your fellows, must you ever go down the ages to your final extinction but little above the plane of the dumb brutes that serve you! A people without written

language, without art, without homes, without love; the victim of eons of the horrible community idea. Owning everything in common, even to your women and children, has resulted in your owning nothing in common. You hate each other as you hate all else except yourselves. Come back to the ways of our common ancestors, come back to the light of kindness and fellowship. The way is open to you, you will find the hands of the red men stretched out to aid you. Together we may do still more to regenerate our dying planet. The granddaughter of the greatest and mightiest of the red jeddaks has asked you. Will you come?"

Lorquas Ptomel and the warriors sat looking silently and intently at the young woman for several moments after she had ceased speaking. What was passing in their minds no man may know, but that they were moved I truly believe, and if one man high among them had been strong enough to rise above custom, that moment would have marked a new and mighty era for Mars.

I saw Tars Tarkas rise to speak, and on his face was such an expression as I have never seen upon the countenance of a green Martian warrior. It bespoke an inward and mighty battle with self, with heredity, with age-old custom, and as he opened his mouth to speak, a look almost of benignity, of kindness, momentarily lighted up his fierce and terrible countenance.

What words of moment were to have fallen from his lips were never spoken, as just then a young warrior, evidently sensing the trend of thought among the older men, leaped down from the steps of the rostrum, and striking the frail captive a powerful blow across the face, which felled her to the floor, placed his foot upon her prostrate form and turning toward the assembled council broke into peals of horrid, mirthless laughter.

For an instant I thought Tars Tarkas would strike him dead, nor did the aspect of Lorquas Ptomel augur any too favorably for the brute, but the mood passed, their old selves reasserted their ascendancy, and they smiled. It was portentous however that they did not laugh aloud, for the brute's act constituted a side-splitting witticism according to the ethics which rule green Martian humor.

That I have taken moments to write down a part of what occurred as that blow fell does not signify that I remained inactive for any such length of time. I think I must have sensed something of what was coming, for I realize now that I was crouched as for a spring as I saw the blow aimed at her beautiful, upturned, pleading face, and ere the hand descended I was halfway across the hall.

Scarcely had his hideous laugh rang out but once, when I was upon him. The brute was twelve feet in height and armed to the teeth, but I believe that I could have accounted for the whole roomful in the terrific

intensity of my rage. Springing upward, I struck him full in the face as he turned at my warning cry and then as he drew his short-sword I drew mine and sprang up again upon his breast, hooking one leg over the butt of his pistol and grasping one of his huge tusks with my left hand while I delivered blow after blow upon his enormous chest.

He could not use his short-sword to advantage because I was too close to him, nor could he draw his pistol, which he attempted to do in direct opposition to Martian custom which says that you may not fight a fellow warrior in private combat with any other than the weapon with which you are attacked. In fact he could do nothing but make a wild and futile attempt to dislodge me. With all his immense bulk he was little if any stronger than I, and it was but the matter of a moment or two before he sank, bleeding and lifeless, to the floor.

Dejah Thoris had raised herself upon one elbow and was watching the battle with wide, staring eyes. When I had regained my feet I raised her in my arms and bore her to one of the benches at the side of the room.

Again no Martian interfered with me, and tearing a piece of silk from my cape I endeavored to stanch the flow of blood from her nostrils. I was soon successful as her injuries amounted to little more than an ordinary nosebleed, and when she could speak she placed her hand upon my arm and looking up into my eyes, said:

"Why did you do it? You who refused me even friendly recognition in the first hour of my peril! And now you risk your life and kill one of your companions for my sake. I cannot understand. What strange manner of man are you, that you consort with the green men, though your form is that of my race, while your color is a little darker than that of the white ape? Tell me, are you human, or are you more than human?"

"It is a strange tale," I replied, "too long to attempt to tell you now, and one which I so much doubt the credibility of myself that I fear to hope that others will believe it. Suffice it, for the present, that I am your friend, and, so far as our captors will permit, your protector and your servant."

"Then you too are a prisoner? But why, then, those arms and the regalia of a Tharkian chieftain? What is your name? Where your country?"

"Yes, Dejah Thoris, I too am a prisoner; my name is John Carter, and I claim Virginia, one of the United States of America, Earth, as my home; but why I am permitted to wear arms I do not know, nor was I aware that my regalia was that of a chieftain."

We were interrupted at this juncture by the approach of one of the warriors, bearing arms, accouterments and ornaments, and in a flash one of her questions was answered and a puzzle cleared up for me. I saw that the body of my dead antagonist had been stripped, and I read in the menacing yet respectful attitude of the warrior who had brought me

these trophies of the kill the same demeanor as that evinced by the other who had brought me the original equipment, and now for the first time I realized that my blow, on the occasion of my first battle in the audience chamber had resulted in the death of my adversary.

The reason for the whole attitude displayed toward me was now apparent; I had won my spurs, so to speak, and in the crude justice, which always marks Martian dealings, and which, among other things, has caused me to call her the planet of paradoxes, I was accorded the honors due a conqueror; the trappings and the position of the man I killed. In truth, I was a Martian chieftain, and this I learned later was the cause of my great freedom and my toleration in the audience chamber.

As I had turned to receive the dead warrior's chattels I had noticed that Tars Tarkas and several others had pushed forward toward us, and the eyes of the former rested upon me in a most quizzical manner. Fianally he addressed me:

"You speak the tongue of Barsoom quite readily for one who was deaf and dumb to us a few short days ago. Where did you learn it, John Carter?"

"You, yourself, are responsible, Tars Tarkas," I replied, "in that you furnished me with an instructress of remarkable ability; I have to thank Sola for my learning."

"She has done well," he answered, "but your education in other respects needs considerable polish. Do you know what your unprecedented temerity would have cost you had you failed to kill either of the two chieftains whose metal you now wear?"

"I presume that that one whom I had failed to kill, would have killed me," I answered, smiling.

"No, you are wrong. Only in the last extremity of self-defense would a Martian warrior kill a prisoner; we like to save them for other purposes," and his face bespoke possibilities that were not pleasant to dwell upon.

"But one thing can save you now," he continued. "Should you, in recognition of your remarkable valor, ferocity, and prowess, be considered by Tal Hajus as worthy of his service you may be taken into the community and become a full-fledged Tharkian. Until we reach the headquarters of Tal Hajus it is the will of Lorquas Ptomel that you be accorded the respect your acts have earned you. You will be treated by us as a Tharkian chieftain, but you must not forget that every chief who ranks you is responsible for your safe delivery to our mighty and most ferocious ruler. I am done."

"I hear you, Tars Tarkas," I answered. "As you know I am not of Barsoom; your ways are not my ways, and I can only act in the future



as I have in the past, in accordance with the dictates of my conscience and guided by the standards of mine own people. If you will leave me alone I will go in peace, but if not, let the individual Barsoomians with whom I must deal either respect my rights as a stranger among you, or take whatever consequences may befall. Of one thing let us be sure, whatever may be your ultimate intentions toward this unfortunate young woman, whoever would offer her injury or insult in the future must figure on making a full accounting to me. I understand that you belittle all sentiments of generosity and kindliness, but I do not, and I can convince your most doughty warrior that these characteristics are not incompatible with an ability to fight."

Ordinarily I am not given to long speeches, nor ever before had I descended to bombast, but I had guessed at the keynote which would strike an answering chord in the breast of the green Martians, nor was I wrong, for my harangue evidently deeply impressed them, and their attitude toward me thereafter was still further respectful.

Tars Tarkas himself seemed pleased with my reply, but his only comment was more or less enigmatical—"And I think I know Tal Hajus, Jeddak of Thark."

I now turned my attention to Dejah Thoris, and assisting her to her feet I turned with her toward the exit, ignoring her hovering guardian harpies as well as the inquiring glances of the chieftains. Was I not now a chieftain also! Well, then, I would assume the responsibilities of one. They did not molest us, and so Dejah Thoris, Princess of Helium, and John Carter, gentleman of Virginia, followed by the faithful Woola, passed ihrough utter silence from the audience chamber of Lorquas Ptomel, Jed among the Tharks of Barsoom.

## 9. WITH DEJAH THORIS

AS WE REACHED the open the two female guards who had been detailed to watch over Dejah Thoris hurried up and made as though to assume custody of her once more. The poor child shrank against me and I felt her two little hands fold tightly over my arm. Waving the women away, I informed them that Sola would attend the captive hereafter, and I further warned Sarkoja that any more of her cruel attentions bestowed \_pon Dejah Thoris would result in Sarkoja's sudden and painful demise.

My threat was unfortunate and resulted in more harm than good to Dejah Thoris, for, as I learned later, men do not kill women upon Mars, nor women, men. So Sarkoja merely gave us an ugly look and departed to hatch up deviltries against us.

I soon found Sola and explained to her that I wished her to guard Dejah Thoris as she had guarded me; that I wished her to find other quarters where they would not be molested by Sarkoja, and I finally informed her that I myself would take up my quarters among the men.

Sola glanced at the accouterments which were carried in my hand and slung across my shoulder.

"You are a great chieftain now, John Carter," she said, "and I must do your bidding, though indeed I am glad to do it under any circumstances. The man whose metal you carry was young, but he was a great warrior, and had by his promotions and kills won his way close to the rank of Tars Tarkas, who, as you know, is second to Lorquas Ptomel only. You are eleventh, there are but ten chieftains in this community who rank you in prowess."

"And if I should kill Lorquas Ptomel?" I asked.

"You would be first, John Carter; but you may only win that honor by the will of the entire council that Lorquas Ptomel meet you in combat, or should he attack you, you may kill him in self-defense, and thus win first place."

I laughed, and changed the subject. I had no particular desire to kill Lorquas Ptomel, and less to be a jed among the Tharks.

I accompanied Sola and Dejah Thoris in a search for new quarters, which we found in a building nearer the audience chamber and of far more pretentious architecture than our former habitation. We also found in this building real sleeping apartments with ancient beds of highly wrought metal swinging from enormous gold chains depending from the marble ceilings. The decoration of the walls was most elaborate, and, unlike the frescoes in the other buildings I had examined, portrayed many human figures in the compositions. These were of people like myself, and of a much lighter color than Dejah Thoris. They were clad in graceful, flowing robes, highly ornamented with metal and jewels, and their luxuriant hair was of a beautiful golden and reddish bronze. The men were beardless and only a few wore arms. The scenes depicted for the most part, a fair-skinned, fair-haired people at play.

Dejah Thoris clasped her hands with an exclamation of rapture as she gazed upon these magnificent works of art, wrought by a people long extinct; while Sola, on the other hand, apparently did not see them.

We decided to use this room, on the second floor and overlooking the plaza, for Dejah Thoris and Sola, and another room adjoining and in the rear for the cooking and supplies. I then dispatched Sola to bring the bedding and such food and utensils as she might need, telling her that I would guard Dejah Thoris until her return.

As Sola departed Dejah Thoris turned to me with a faint smile.

"And whereto, then, would your prisoner escape should you leave her, unless it was to follow you and crave your protection, and ask your pardon for the cruel thoughts she had harbored against you these past few days?"

"You are right," I answered, "there is no escape for either of us unless we go together."

"I heard your challenge to the creature you call Tars Tarkas, and I think I understand your position among these people, but what I cannot fathom is your statement that you are not of Barsoom.

"In the name of my first ancestor, then," she continued, "where may you be from? You are like unto my people, and yet so unlike. You speak my language, and yet I heard you tell Tars Tarkas that you had but learned it recently. All Barsoomians speak the same tongue from the ice-clad south to the ice-clad north, though their written languages differ. Only in the valley Dor, where the river Iss empties into the lost sea of Korus, is there supposed to be a different language spoken, and, except in the legends of our ancestors, there is no record of a Barsoomian returning up the river Iss, from the shores of Korus in the valley of Dor. Do not tell me that you have thus returned! They would kill you horribly anywhere upon the surface of Barsoom if that were true; tell me it is not!"

Her eyes were filled with a strange, weird light; her voice was pleading, and her little hands, reached up upon my breast, were pressed against me as though to wring a denial from my very heart.

"I do not know your customs, Dejah Thoris, but in my own Virginia a gentleman does not lie to save himself; I am not of Dor; I have never seen the mysterious Iss; the lost sea of Korus is still lost, so far as I am concerned. Do you believe me?"

And then it struck me suddenly that I was very anxious that she should believe me. It was not that I feared the results which would follow a general belief that I had returned from the Barsoomian heaven or hell, or whatever it was. Why was it, then! Why should I care what she thought? I looked down at her; her beautiful face upturned, and her wonderful eyes opening up the very depth of her soul; and as my eyes met hers I knew why, and—I shuddered.

A similar wave of feeling seemed to stir her; she drew away from me with a sigh, and with her earnest, beautiful face turned up to mine, she whispered: "I believe you, John Carter; I do not know what a 'gentleman' is. nor have I ever heard before of Virginia; but on Barsoom no *man* lies; if he does not wish to speak the truth he is silent. Where is this Virginia, your country, John Carter?" she asked, and it seemed that this fair name of my fair land had never sounded more beautiful than as it fell from those perfect lips on that far-gone day.

"I am of another world," I answered, "the great planet Earth, which revolves about our common sun and next within the orbit of your Barsoom, which we know as Mars. How I came here I cannot tell you, for I do not know; but here I am, and since my presence has permitted me to serve Dejah Thoris I am glad that I am here."

She gazed at me with troubled eyes, long and questioningly. That it was difficult to believe my statement I well knew, nor could I hope that she would do so however much I craved her confidence and respect. I would much rather not have told her anything of my antecedents, but no man could look into the depth of those eyes and refuse her slightest behest.

Finally she smiled, and, rising, said: "I shall have to believe even though I cannot understand. I can readily perceive that you are not of the Barsoom of today; you are like us, yet different—but why should I trouble my poor head with such a problem, when my heart tells me that I believe because I wish to believe!"

It was good logic, good, earthly, feminine logic, and if it satisfied her I certainly could pick no flaws in it. As a matter of fact it was about the only kind of logic that could be brought to bear upon my problem. We fell into a general conversation then, asking and answering many questions on each side. She was curious to learn of the customs of my people and displayed a remarkable knowledge of events on Earth. When I questioned her closely on this seeming familiarity with earthly things she laughed, and cried out:

"Why, every school boy on Barsoom knows the geography, and much concerning the fauna and flora, as well as the history of your planet fully as well as of his own. Can we not see everything which takes place upon Earth, as you call it; is it not hanging there in the heavens in plain sight?"

This baffled me, I must confess, fully as much as my statements had confounded her; and I told her so. She then explained in general the instruments her people had used and been perfecting for ages, which permit them to throw upon a screen a perfect image of what is transpiring upon any planet and upon many of the stars. These pictures are so perfect in detail that, when photographed and enlarged, objects no greater than a blade of grass may be distinctly recognized. I afterward, in Helium, saw many of these pictures, as well as the instruments which produced them.

"If, then, you are so familiar with earthly things," I asked, "why is it that you do not recognize me as identical with the inhabitants of that planet?"

She smiled again as one might in bored indulgence of a questioning child.

"Because, John Carter," she replied, "nearly every planet and star

having atmospheric conditions at all approaching those of Barsoom, shows forms of animal life almost identical with you and me; and, further, Earth men, almost without exception, cover their bodies with strange, unsightly pieces of cloth, and their heads with hideous contraptions the purpose of which we have been unable to conceive; while you, when found by the Tharkian warriors, were entirely undisfigured and unadorned.

"The fact that you wore no ornaments is a strong proof of your un-Barsoomian origin, while the absence of grotesque coverings might cause a doubt as to your earthliness."

I then narrated the details of my departure from the Earth, explaining that my body there lay fully clothed in all the, to her, strange garments of mundane dwellers. At this point Sola returned with our meager belongings and her young Martian protege, who, of course, would have to share the quarters with them.

Sola asked us if we had had a visitor during her absence, and seemed much surprised when we answered in the negative. It seemed that as she had mounted the approach to the upper floors where our quarters were located, she had met Sarkoja descending. We decided that she must have been eavesdropping, but as we could recall nothing of importance that had passed between us we dismissed the matter as of little consequence, merely promising ourselves to be warned to the utmost caution in the future.

Dejah Thoris and I then fell to examining the architecture and decorations of the beautiful chambers of the building we were occupying. She told me that these people had presumably flourished over a hundred thousand years before. They were early progenitors of her race, but had mixed with the other great race of early Martians, who were very dark, almost black, and also with the reddish yellow race which had flourished over at the same time.

These three great divisions of the higher Martians had been forced into a mighty alliance as the drying up of the Martian seas had compelled them to seek the comparatively few and always diminishing fertile areas, and to defend themselves, under new conditions of life, against the wild hordes of green men.

Ages of close relationship and intermarrying had resulted in the race of red men, of which Dejah Thoris was a fair and beautiful daughter. During the ages of hardships and incessant warring between their own various races, as well as with the green men, and before they had fitted themselves to the changed conditions, much of the high civilization and many of the arts of the fair-haired Martians had become lost; but the red race of today has reached a point where it feels that it has made up in new discoveries and in a more practical civilization for all that lies

irretrievably buried with the ancient Barsoomians, beneath the countless intervening ages.

These ancient Martians had been a highly cultivated and literary race, but during the vicissitudes of those trying centuries of readjustment to new conditions, not only did their advancement and production cease entirely, but practically all their archives, records, and literature were lost.

Dejah Thoris related many interesting facts and legends concerning this lost race of noble and kindly people. She said that the city in which we were camping was supposed to have been a center of commerce and culture known as Korad. It had been built upon a beautiful, natural harbor, landlocked by magnificent hills. The little valley on the west front of the city, she explained, was all that remained of the harbor, while the pass through the hills to the old sea bottom had been the channel through which the shipping passed up to the city's gates.

The shores of the ancient seas were dotted with just such cities, and lesser ones, in diminishing numbers, were to be found converging toward the center of the oceans, as the people had found it necessary to follow the receding waters until necessity had forced upon them their ultimate salvation, the so-called Martian canals.

We had been so engrossed in exploration of the building and in our conversation that it was late in the afternoon before we realized it. We were brought back to a realization of our present conditions by a messenger bearing a summons from Lorquas Ptomel directing me to appear before him forthwith. Bidding Dejah Thoris and Sola farewell, and commanding Woola to remain on guard, I hastened to the audience chamber, where I found Lorquas Ptomel and Tars Tarkas seated upon the rostrum.

## 10. A PRISONER WITH POWER

AS I ENTERED and saluted, Lorquas Ptomel signaled me to advance, and, fixing his great, hideous eyes upon me, addressed me thus:

"You have been with us a few days, yet during that time you have by your prowess won a high position among us. Be that as it may, you are not one of us; you owe us no allegiance.

"Your position is a peculiar one," he continued; "you are a prisoner and yet you give commands which must be obeyed; you are an alien and yet you are a Tharkian chieftain; you are a midget and yet you can kill a mighty warrior with one blow of your fist. And now you are reported to have been plotting to escape with another prisoner of another

race; a prisoner who, from her own admission, half believes you are returned from the valley of Dor. Either one of these accusations, if proved, would be sufficient grounds for your execution, but we are a just people and you shall have a trial on our return to Thark, if Tal Hajus so commands.

"But," he continued, in his fierce guttural tones, "if you run off with the red girl it is I who shall have to account to Tal Hajus; it is I who shall have to face Tars Tarkas, and either demonstrate my right to command, or the metal from my dead carcass will go to a better man, for such is the custom of the Tharks.

"I have no quarrel with Tars Tarkas; together we rule supreme the greatest of the lesser communities among the green men; we do not wish to fight between ourselves; and so if you were dead, John Carter, I should be glad. Under two conditions only, however, may you be killed by us without orders from Tal Hajus; in personal combat in self-defense, should you attack one of us, or were you apprehended in an attempt to escape.

"As a matter of justice I must warn you that we only await one of these two excuses for ridding ourselves of so great a responsibility. The safe delivery of the red girl to Tal Hajus is of the greatest importance. Not in a thousand years have the Tharks made such a capture; she is the granddaughter of the greatest of the red jeddaks, who is also our bitterest enemy. I have spoken. The red girl told us that we were without the softer sentiments of humanity, but we are a just and truthful race. You may go."

Turning, I left the audience chamber. So this was the beginning of Sarkoja's persecution! I knew that none other could be responsible for this report which had reached the ears of Lorquas Ptomel so quickly, and now I recalled those portions of our conversation which had touched upon escape and upon my origin.

Sarkoja was at this time Tars Tarkas' oldest and most trusted female. As such she was a mighty power behind the throne, for no warrior had the confidence of Lorquas Ptomel to such an extent as did his ablest lieutenant, Tars Tarkas.

However, instead of putting thoughts of possible escape from my mind, my audience with Lorquas Ptomel only served to center my every faculty on this subject. Now, more than before, the absolute necessity for escape, in so far as Dejah Thoris was concerned, was impressed upon me, for I was convinced that some horrible fate awaited her at the headquarters of Tal Hajus.

As described by Sola, this monster was the exaggerated personification of all the ages of cruelty, ferocity, and brutality from which he had

descended. Cold, cunning, calculating; he was, also, in marked contrast to most of his fellows, a slave to that brute passion which the waning demands for procreation upon their dying planet has almost stilled in the Martian breast.

The thought that the divine Dejah Thoris might fall into the clutches of such an abysmal atavism started the cold sweat upon me. Far better that we save friendly bullets for ourselves at the last moment, as did those brave frontier women of my lost land, who took their own lives rather than fall into the hands of the Indian braves.

As I wandered about the plaza lost in my gloomy forebodings Tars Tarkas approached me on his way from the audience chamber. His demeanor toward me was unchanged, and he greeted me as though we had not just parted a few moments before.

"Where are your quarters, John Carter?" he asked.

"I have selected none," I replied. "It seemed best that I quartered either by myself or among the other warriors, and I was awaiting an opportunity to ask your advice. As you know," and I smiled, "I am not yet familiar with all the customs of the Tharks."

"Come with me," he directed, and together we moved off across the plaza to a building which I was glad to see adjoined that occupied by Sola and her charges.

"My quarters are on the first floor of this building," he said, "and the second floor also is fully occupied by warriors, but the third floor and the floors above are vacant; you may take your choice of these.

"I understand," he continued, "that you have given up your woman to the red prisoner. Well, as you have said, your ways are not our ways, but you can fight well enough to do about as you please, and so, if you wish to give your woman to a captive, it is your own affair; but as a chieftain you should have those to serve you, and in accordance with our customs you may select any or all the females from the retainers of the chieftains whose metal you now wear."

I thanked him, but assured him that I could get along very nicely without assistance except in the matter of preparing food, and so he promised to send women to me for this purpose and also for the care of my arms and the manufacture of my ammunition, which he said would be necessary. I suggested that they might also bring some of the sleeping silks and furs which belonged to me as spoils of combat, for the nights were cold and I had none of my own.

He promised to do so, and departed. Left alone, I ascended the winding corridor to the upper floors in search of suitable quarters. The beauties of the other buildings were repeated in this, and, as usual, I was soon lost in a tour of investigation and discovery.



I finally chose a front room on the third floor, because this brought me nearer to Dejah Thoris, whose apartment was on the second floor of the adjoining building, and it flashed upon me that I could rig up some means of communication whereby she might signal me in case she needed either my services or my protection.

Adjoining my sleeping apartment were baths, dressing rooms, and other sleeping and living apartments, in all some ten rooms on this floor. The windows of the back rooms overlooked an enormous court, which formed the center of the square made by the buildings which faced the four contiguous streets, and which was now given over to the quartering of the various animals belonging to the warriors occupying the adjoining buildings.

While the court was entirely overgrown with the yellow, moss-like vegetation which blankets practically the entire surface of Mars, yet numerous fountains, statuary, benches, and pergola-like contraptions bore witness to the beauty which the court must have presented in bygone times, when graced by the fair-haired, laughing people whom stern and unalterable cosmic laws had driven not only from their homes, but from all except the vague legends of their descendants.

One could easily picture the gorgeous foliage of the luxuriant Martian vegetation which once filled this scene with life and color; the graceful figures of the beautiful women, the straight and handsome men; the happy frolicking children—all sunlight, happiness and peace. It was difficult to realize that they had gone; down through ages of darkness, cruelty, and Ignorance, until their hereditary instincts of culture and humanitarianism had risen ascendant once more in the final composite race which now is dominant upon Mars.

My thoughts were cut short by the advent of several young females bearing loads of weapons, silks, furs, jewels, cooking utensils, and casks of food and drink, including considerable loot from the air craft. All this, it seemed, had been the property of the two chieftains I had slain, and now, by the customs of the Tharks, it had become mine. At my direction they placed the stuff in one of the back rooms, and then departed, only to return with a second load, which they advised me constituted the balance of my goods. On the second trip they were accompanied by ten or fifteen other women and youths, who, it seemed, formed the retinues of the two chieftains.

They were not their families, nor their wives, nor their servants; the relationship was peculiar, and so unlike anything known to us that it is most difficult to describe. All property among the green Martians is owned in common by the community, except the personal weapons, ornaments and sleeping silks and furs of the individuals. These alone can one claim

undisputed right to, nor may he accumulate more of these than are required for his actual needs. The surplus he holds merely as custodian, and it is passed on to the younger members of the community as necessity demands.

The women and children of a man's retinue may be likened to a military unit for which he is responsible in various ways, as in matters of instruction, discipline, sustenance, and the exigencies of their continual roamings and their unending strife with other communities and with the red Martians. His women are in no sense wives. The green Martians use no word corresponding in meaning with this earthly word. Their mating is a matter of community interest solely, and is directed without reference to natural selection. The council of chieftains of each community control the matter as surely as the owner of a Kentucky racing stud directs the scientific breeding of his stock for the improvement of the whole.

In theory it may sound well, as is often the case with theories, but the results of ages of this unnatural practice, coupled with the community interest in the offspring being held paramount to that of the mother, is shown in the cold, cruel creatures, and their gloomy, loveless, mirthless existence.

It is true that the green Martians are absolutely virtuous, both men and women, with the exception of such degenerates as Tal Hajus; but better far a finer balance of human characteristics even at the expense of a slight and occasional loss of chastity.

Finding that I must assume responsibility for these creatures, whether I would or not, I made the best of it and directed them to find quarters on the upper floors, leaving the third floor to me. One of the girls I charged with the duties of my simple cuisine, and directed the others to take up the various activities which had formerly constituted their vocations. Thereafter I saw little of them, nor did I care to.

## 11. LOVE-MAKING ON MARS

FOLLOWING THE BATTLE with the air ships, the community remained within the city for several days, abandoning the homeward march until they could feel reasonably assured that the ships would not return; for to be caught on the open plains with a cavalcade of chariots and children was far from the desire of even so warlike a people as the green Martians.

During our period of inactivity, Tars Tarkas had instructed me in many of the customs and arts of war familiar to the Tharks, including lessons in riding and guiding the great beasts which bore the warriors. These

creatures, which are known as thoats, are dangerous and vicious as their masters, but when once subdued are sufficiently tractable for the purposes of the green Martians.

Two of these animals had fallen to me from the warriors whose metal I wore, and in a short time I could handle them quite as well as the native warriors. The method was not at all complicated. If the thoats did not respond with sufficient celerity to the telepathic instructions of their riders they were dealt a terrific blow between the ears with the butt of a pistol, and if they showed fight this treatment was continued until the brutes either were subdued, or had unseated their riders.

In the latter case it became a life and death struggle between the man and the beast. If the former were quick enough with his pistol he might live to ride again, though upon some other beast; if not, his torn and mangled body was gathered up by his women and burned in accordance with Tharkian custom.

My experience with Woola determined me to attempt the experiment of kindness in my treatment of my thoats. First I taught them that they could not unseat me, and even rapped them sharply between the ears to impress upon them my authority and mastery. Then, by degrees, I won their confidence in much the same manner as I had adopted countless times with my many mundane mounts. I was ever a good hand with animals, and by inclination, as well as because it brought more lasting and satisfactory results, I was always kind and humane in my dealings with the lower orders. I could take a human life, if necessary, with far less compunction than that of a poor, unreasoning, irresponsible brute.

In the course of a few days my thoats were the wonder of the entire community. They would follow me like dogs, rubbing their great snouts against my body in awkward evidence of affection, and respond to my every command with an alacrity and docility which caused the Martian warriors to ascribe to me the possession of some earthly power unknown on Mars.

"How have you bewitched them?" asked Tars Tarkas one afternoon, when he had seen me run my arm far between the great jaws of one of my thoats which had wedged a piece of stone between two of his teeth while feeding upon the moss-like vegetation within our court yard.

"By kindness," I replied. "You see, Tars Tarkas, the softer sentiments have their value, even to a warrior. In the height of battle as well as upon the march I know that my thoats will obey my every command, and therefore my fighting efficiency is enhanced, and I am a better warrior for the reason that I am a kind master. Your other warriors would find it to the advantage of themselves as well as of the community to adopt my methods in this respect. Only a few days since you, yourself,

told me that these great brutes, by the uncertainty of their tempers, often were the means of turning victory into defeat, since, at a crucial moment, they might elect to unseat and rend their riders."

"Show me how you accomplish these results," was Tars Tarkas' only rejoinder.

And so I explained as carefully as I could the entire method of training I had adopted with my beasts, and later he had me repeat it before Lorquas Ptomel and the assembled warriors. That moment marked the beginning of a new existence for the poor thoats, and before I left the community of Lorquas Ptomel I had the satisfaction of observing a regiment of as tractable and docile mounts as one might care to see. The effect on the precision and celerity of the military movements was so remarkable that Lorquas Ptomel presented me with a massive anklet of gold from his own leg, as a sign of his appreciation of my service to the horde.

On the seventh day following the battle with the air craft we again took up the march toward Thark, all probability of another attack being deemed remote by Lorquas Ptomel.

During the days just preceding our departure I had seen but little of Dejah Thoris, as I had been kept very busy by Tars Tarkas with my lessons in the art of Martian warfare, as well as in the training of my thoats. The few times I had visited her quarters she had been absent, walking upon the streets with Sola, or investigating the buildings in the near vicinity of the plaza. I had warned them against venturing far from the plaza for fear of the great white apes, whose ferocity I was only too well acquainted with. However, since Woola accompanied them on all their excursions, and as Sola was well armed, there was comparatively little cause for fear.

On the evening before our departure I saw them approaching along one of the great avenues which lead into the plaza from the east. I advanced to meet them, and telling Sola that I would take the responsibility for Dejah Thoris' safe keeping, I directed her to return to her quarters on some trivial errand. I liked and trusted Sola, but for some reason I desired to be alone with Dejah Thoris, who represented to me all that I had left behind upon Earth in agreeable and congenial companionship. There seemed bonds of mutual interest between us as powerful as though we had been born under the same roof rather than upon different planets, hurtling through space some forty-eight million miles apart.

That she shared my sentiments in this respect I was positive, for on my approach the look of pitiful hopelessness left her sweet countenance to be replaced by a smile of joyful welcome, as she placed her little right hand upon my left shoulder in true red Martian salute.

"Sarkoja told Sola that you had become a true Thark," she said, "and that I would now see no more of you than of any of the other warriors."

"Sarkoja is a liar of the first magnitude," I replied, "notwithstanding the proud claim of the Tharks to absolute verity."

Dejah Thoris laughed.

"I knew that even though you became a member of the community you would not cease to be my friend; 'A warrior may change his metal, but not his heart,' as the saying is upon Barsoom.

"I think they have been trying to keep us apart," she continued, "for whenever you have been off duty one of the older women of Tars Tarkas' retinue has always arranged to trump up some excuse to get Sola and me out of sight. They have had me down in the pits below the buildings helping them mix their awful radium powder, and make their terrible projectiles. You know that these have to be manufactured by artificial light, as exposure to sunlight always results in an explosion. You have noticed that their bullets explode when they strike an object? Well, the opaque, outer coating is broken by the impact, exposing a glass cylinder, almost solid, in the forward end of which is a minute particle of radium powder. The moment the sunlight, even though diffused, strikes this powder it explodes with a violence which nothing can withstand. If you ever witness a night battle you will note the absence of these explosions, while the morning following the battle will be filled at sunrise with the sharp detonations of exploding missiles fired the preceding night. As a rule, non-exploding projectiles are used at night."\*

While I was much interested in Dejah Thoris' explanation of this wonderful adjunct to Martian warfare, I was more concerned by the immediate problem of their treatment of her. That they were keeping her away from me was not a matter for surprise, but that they should subject her to dangerous and arduous labor filled me with rage.

"Have they ever subjected you to cruelty and ignominy, Dejah Thoris?" I asked, feeling the hot blood of my fighting ancestors leap in my veins as I awaited her reply.

"Only in little ways, John Carter," she answered. "Nothing that can harm me outside my pride. They know that I am the daughter of ten thousand jeddaks, that I trace my ancestry straight back without a break to the builder of the first great waterway, and they, who do not even know their own mothers, are jealous of me. At heart they hate their

\* I have used the word "radium" in describing this powder because in the light of recent discoveries on Earth I believe it to be a mixture of which radium is the base. In Captain Carter's manuscript it is mentioned always by the name used in the written language of Helium and is spelled in hieroglyphics which it would be difficult and useless to reproduce.

horrid fates, and so wreak their poor spite on me who stand for everything they have not, and for all they most crave and never can attain. Let us pity them, my chieftain, for even though we die at their hands we can afford them pity, since we are greater than they and they know it."

Had I know the significance of those words "my chieftain," as applied by a red Martian woman to a man, I should have had the surprise of my life, but I did not know at that time, nor for many months thereafter. Yes, I still had much to learn upon Barsoom.

"I presume it is the better part of wisdom that we bow to our fate with as good grace as possible, Dejah Thoris; but I hope, nevertheless, that I may be present the next time that any Martian, green, red, pink, or violet, has the temerity to even so much as frown on you, my princess."

Dejah Thoris caught her breath at my last words, and gazed upon me with dilated eyes and quickening breath, and then, with an odd little laugh, which brought roguish dimples to the corners of her mouth, she shook her head and cried:

"What a child! A great warrior and yet a stumbling little child."

"What have I done now?" I asked, in sore perplexity.

"Some day you shall know, John Carter, if we live; but I may not tell you. And I, the daughter of Mors Kajak, son of Tardos Mors, have listened without anger," she soliloquized in conclusion.

Then she broke out again into one of her gay, happy, laughing moods; joking with me on my prowess as a Thark warrior as contrasted with my soft heart and natural kindliness.

"I presume that should you accidentally wound an enemy you would take him home and nurse him back to health," she laughed.

"That is precisely what we do on Earth," I answered. "At least among civilized men."

This made her laugh again. She could not understand it, for, with all her tenderness and womanly sweetness, she was still a Martian, and to a Martian the only good enemy is a dead enemy; for every dead foeman means so much more to divide between those who live.

I was very curious to know what I had said or done to cause her so much perturbation a moment before and so I continued to importune her to enlighten me.

"No," she exclaimed, "it is enough that you have said it and that I have listened. And when you learn, John Carter, and if I be dead, as likely enough I shall be ere the further moon has circled Barsoom another twelve times, remember that I listened and that I—smiled."

It was all Greek to me, but the more I begged her to explain the

more positive became her denials of my request, and, so, in very hopelessness, I desisted.

Day had now given away to night and as we wandered along the great avenue lighted by the two moons of Barsoom, and with Earth looking down upon us out of her luminous green eye, it seemed that we were alone in the universe, and I, at least, was content that it should be so.

The chill of the Martian night was upon us, and removing my silks I threw them across the shoulders of Dejah Thoris. As my arm rested for an instant upon her I felt a thrill pass through every fiber of my being such as contact with no other mortal had even produced; and it seemed to me that she had leaned slightly toward me, but of that I was not sure. Only I knew that as my arm rested there across her shoulders longer than the act of adjusting the silk required she did not draw away, nor did she speak. And so, in silence, we walked the surface of a dying world, but in the breast of one of us at least had been born that which is ever oldest, yet ever new.

I loved Dejah Thoris. The touch of my arm upon her naked shoulder had spoken to me in words I could not mistake, and I knew that I had loved her since the first moment that my eyes had met hers that first time in the plaza of the dead city of Korad.

My first impulse was to tell her of my love, and then I thought of the helplessness of her position wherein I alone could lighten the burdens of her captivity, and protect her in my poor way against the thousands of hereditary enemies she must face upon our arrival at Thark. I could not chance causing her additional pain or sorrow by declaring a love which, in all probability she did not return. Should I be so indiscreet, her position would be even more unbearable than now, and the thought that she might feel that I was taking advantage of her helplessness, to influence her decision was the final argument which sealed my lips.

"Why are you so quiet, Dejah Thoris?" I asked. "Possibly you would rather return to Sola and your quarters."

"No," she murmured, "I am happy here. I do not know why it is that I should always be happy and contented when you, John Carter, a stranger, are with me; yet at such times it seems that I am safe and that, with you, I shall soon return to my father's court and feel his strong arms about me and my mother's tears and kisses on my cheek."

"Do people kiss, then, upon Barsoom?" I asked, when she had explained the word she used, in answer to my inquiry as to its meaning.

"Parents, brothers, and sisters, yes; and," she added in a low, thoughtful tone, "lovers."

"And you, Dejah Thoris, have parents and brothers and sisters?"

"Yes."

"And a—lover?"

She was silent, nor could I venture to repeat the question.

"The man of Barsoom," she finally ventured, "does not ask personal questions of women, except his mother, and the woman he has fought for and won."

"But I have fought—" I started, and then I wished my tongue had been cut from my mouth; for she turned even as I caught myself and ceased, and drawing my silks from her shoulder she held them out to me, and without a word, and with head held high, she moved with the carriage of the queen she was toward the plaza and the doorway of her quarters.

I did not attempt to follow her, other than to see that she reached the building in safety, but, directing Woola to accompany her, I turned disconsolately and entered my own house. I sat for hours cross-legged, and cross-tempered, upon my silks meditating upon the queer freaks chance plays upon us poor devils of mortals.

So this was love! I had escaped it for all the years I had roamed the five continents and their encircling seas; in spite of beautiful women and urging opportunity; in spite of a half-desire for love and a constant search for my ideal, it had remained for me to fall furiously and hopelessly in love with a creature from another world, of a species similar possibly, yet not identical with mine. A woman who was hatched from an egg, and whose span of life might cover a thousand years; whose people had strange customs and ideas; a woman whose hopes, whose pleasures, whose standards of virtue and of right and wrong might vary as greatly from mine as did those of the green Martians.

Yes, I was a fool, but I was in love, and though I was suffering the greatest misery I had ever known I would not have had it otherwise for all the riches of Barsoom. Such is love, and such are lovers wherever love is known.

To me, Dejah Thoris was all that was perfect; all that was virtuous and beautiful and noble and good. I believed that from the bottom of my heart, from the depth of my soul on that night in Korad as I sat cross-legged upon my silks while the nearer moon of Barsoom raced through the western sky toward the horizon, and lighted up the gold and marble, and jeweled mosaics of my world-old chamber, and I believe it today as I sit at my desk in the little study overlooking the Hudson. Twenty years have intervened; for ten of them I lived and fought for Dejah Thoris and her people, and for ten I have lived upon her memory.



January (undated)-January 20, 1912

**H H H H H**

# DARKNESS AND DAWN

**by George Allan England**

^g George Allan England began writing scientific romances almost simultaneously with Edgar Rice Burroughs, and though he is one of the most important figures among the school of writers who wrote the scientific romance, he was no imitator. His trilogy, *Darkness and Dawn*, *Beyond the Great Oblivion*, and *The Afterglow* opened a great opportunity to him which he failed to exploit.

He was born in Nebraska, February 9, 1877, and raised on Army posts, since his father was a military officer. When his family moved to Boston, he worked his way through Harvard, receiving a degree, incipient T.B., and a nervous breakdown in that order. Recovering from his illness in the Maine woods, he tried his hand at writing and sold his first story in 1903. His initial science fiction was a time-travel story, *The Time Reflector*, in THE MONTHLY STORY BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE for October 5, 1905. His first sale to Frank A. Munsey Co. was *At the Eleventh Hour* (THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, December, 1905).

He evidently had a knowledge of several foreign languages, for he was paid sixty dollars for a translation from the French of *The Horta*, by Guy de Maupassant, which appeared in the June, 1911, THE SCRAP BOOK; and a book appeared under his byline titled *Their Son and the Necklace*, which was claimed to be a translation from the Spanish.

His early difficulties in procuring an education embittered him at the "system." and he became a militant socialist, writing many pamphlets for the movement as well as proselytizing in his novels *The Golden Blight* and *The Air Trust*.

England tried to live some of the adventure he wrote, and shipped aboard a sealing vessel to the arctic, telling his experiences in *Vikings of the Ice* (Double-

day, Page & Co., 1924), including a photo of himself. The arctic fascinated him, and he wrote several novels of that locale.

His favorite avocation was treasure hunting, and he organized expeditions to dredge up ancient gold, jewels, and even whiskey from the bottom of the sea. His novelette *May Gold* (REAL DETECTIVE TALES AND MYSTERY STORIES, December, 1929-January 1930) was based on a personal expedition to locate such treasure.

In an article titled *Facts About Fantasy* (THE STORY WORLD, July, 1923), he advised other writers that "one of the most profitable fields of fiction, if the writer knows how to cultivate it, is that which for lack of a better term we may call 'pseudo-scientific'!" He failed to follow his own advice, and for the last sixteen years of his life, prior to his death June 26, 1936, wrote very little fantasy. Were it not for his science fiction, his name would have already disappeared into oblivion.

George Allan England's name is synonymous with his most famous work, *Darkness and Dawn*, and a unit of that novel, virtually complete in itself, follows. This segment starts at the very beginning of the story, where a man and a woman from New York City at the turn of the century awaken thousands of years in the future when civilization has been destroyed and changes in the earth's features as well as monstrously mutated "humans" offer little hope of survival. The organization of their resources to face the savage alternatives about them and the closeness required by mutual dependency inevitably creates a binding attachment. The full story is a classic, three novels in length, creating a memorable trilogy.

## 1. THE AWAKENING

DIMLY, LIKE THE daybreak glimmer of a sky long wrapped in fogs, a sign of consciousness began to dawn in the face of the tranced girl.

Once more the breath of life began to stir in that full bosom, to which again a vital warmth had on this day of days crept slowly back.

And as she lay there, prone upon the dusty floor, her beautiful face buried and shielded in the hollow of her arm, a sigh welled from her lips.

Life—life was flowing back again! The miracle of miracles was growing to reality.

Faintly now she breathed; vaguely her heart began to throb once more. She stirred. She moaned, still for the moment powerless to cast off wholly the enshrouding incubus of that tremendous, dreamless sleep.

Then her hands closed. The finely tapered fingers tangled themselves

in the masses of thick, luxuriant hair which lay outspread all over and about her. The eyelids trembled.

And, a moment later, Beatrice Kendrick was sitting up, dazed and utterly uncomprehending, peering about her at the strangest vision which since the world began has ever been the lot to any human creature to behold. The vision of a place transformed beyond all power of the intellect to understand.

For of the room which she remembered, which had been her last sight when (so long, so very long, ago) her eyes had closed with that sudden and unconquerable drowsiness, of that room, I say, remained only walls, ceiling, floor of rust-red steel and crumbling cement.

Quite gone was all the plaster, as by magic. Here or there a heap of whitish dust betrayed where some of its detritus still lay.

Gone was every picture, chart, and map which—but an hour since, it seemed to her—had decked this office of Allan Stern, consulting engineer; this aerie up in the forty-eighth story of the Metropolitan Tower.

Furniture there now was none. Over the still intact glass of the windows cobwebs were draped so thickly as almost to exclude the light of day—a strange, fly-infested curtain where once neat green shade-rollers had hung.

Even as the bewildered girl sat there, lips parted, eyes wide with amaze, a spider seized his buzzing prey and scampered back into a hole in the wall.

A huge, leathery bat, suspended upside down in the far corner, cheeped with dry, crepitant sounds of irritation.

Beatrice rubbed her eyes.

"What?" she said, quite slowly. "Dreaming? How singular! I only wish I could remember this when I wake up. Of all the dreams I ever had, this one's certainly the strangest. So real, so vivid! Why, I could swear I was awake—and yet—"

All at once a sudden doubt flashed into her mind. An uneasy expression dawned across her face. Her eyes grew wild with a great fear; the fear of utter and absolute incomprehension.

Something about this room, this weird awakening, bore in upon her consciousness the dread tidings this was not a dream!

Something drove home to her the fact that it was real, objective, positive! And with a gasp of fright she struggled up amid the litter and the rubbish of that uncanny room.

"Oh!" she cried in terror, as a huge scorpion, malevolent, and with its tail raised to strike, scuttled away and vanished through a gaping void where once the corridor door had swung. "Oh, oh! Where am I? What, *what has happened?*"

Horried beyond all words, pale and staring, both hands clutched to her breast, whereon her very clothing now had torn and crumbled, she faced about.

It seemed to her as though some monstrous, evil thing was lurking in the dim corner at her back. She tried to scream, but no sound, save a choked gasp, issued from her lips.

Then she started toward the doorway. Even as she took the first few steps her gown, a mere tattered mockery of raiment, fell away from her.

And, confronted by a new problem, she stopped short. She peered about her in vain for something to protect her disarray. There was nothing.

"Why, where's my chair? My desk?" she exclaimed thickly, starting toward the place by the window where they should have been, and were not. Her shapely feet fell soundlessly in that strange and impalpable dust which coated everything.

"My typewriter? Can that be my typewriter? Great Heavens! What's the matter here, with everything? Am I mad?"

There before her lay a somewhat larger pile of dust mixed with soft and punky splinters of rotten wood. Amid all this decay she saw some bits of rust, a corroded type-bar, or two, even a few rubber key-caps, still recognizable, though with the letters quite obliterated.

All about her, veiling her completely in a mantle of wondrous gloss and beauty, her lustrous hair fell, as she stooped to see this strange, incomprehensible phenomenon. She tried to pick up one of the rubber caps. At her merest touch it crumbled to an impalpable white powder.

With a shuddering cry, the girl sprang back, terrified.

"Merciful Heavens!" she whispered. "What does all this mean?"

For a moment she stood there, her every power of thought, of motion, numbed. Breathing not, she only stared in a wild kind of cringing amazement as perhaps you might if you should see a dead man move.

Then she ran to the door. Out into the hall she peered, this way and that, down the dismantled corridor, up the wreckage of the stairs, which were all cumbered, like the office itself, with dust and webs and vermin.

Aloud she hailed: "Oh! Help, help, help!" No answer. Even the echoes flung back only dull, vacuous sounds that deepened her sense of awful and incredible isolation.

What? No noise of human life anywhere to be heard? None! No familiar hum of the metropolis now rose from what were swarming streets and miles on miles of habitations.

Instead, a blank, unbroken, leaden silence, that seemed part of the musty, choking atmosphere. A silence that weighed down on Beatrice like funeral palls.

Dumbfounded by all this, and by the universal crumbling of every perishable thing, the girl ran, shuddering, back into the office. There in the dust her foot struck something hard.

She stooped; she caught it up and stared at it.

"My glass ink-well! What? Only such things remain?"

No dream, then, but reality! She knew at length that some catastrophe, incredibly vast, some disaster cosmic in the tragedy of its sweep, had desolated the world.

"Oh, my mother!" she cried. "My mother—dead? Dead, now, how long?"

She did not weep, but just stood there, cowering, a chill of anguished horror racking her. All at once her teeth began to chatter, her body to shake as with an ague.

For a moment, dazed and stunned, she remained there, not knowing which way to turn nor what to do. Then her terror-stricken gaze fell on the inner doorway, leading from her outer office to the inner one, the one where Stern had had his laboratory and his consultation room.

This door now hung, a few worm-eaten planks and splintered bits of wood, barely supported by the rusty hinges.

Toward it she staggered. She drew the sheltering masses of her hair about her, like a Godiva of another age; and to her eyes, womanlike, the hot tears mounted. As she went, she cried in a voice of horror:

"Mr. Stern! Oh, Mr. Stern! Are *you* dead, too? You can't be—it's too frightful!"

She reached the door. The mere touch of her outstretched hand disintegrated it. Down in a crumbling heap it fell. Thick dust bellied up in a cloud, through which a single sun-ray that entered the cobwebbed pane shot a radiant arrow.

Peering, hesitant, fearful of even greater terrors in that other room, Beatrice peered through this dust-haze. A sick foreboding of evil possessed her at thought of what she might find there—yet she was more afraid of what she knew lay there behind her.

For an instant she stood within the ruined doorway, her left hand resting on the moldy jamb. Then, with a cry, she started forward—a cry in which terror had given place to joy, despair to hope.

Forgotten now the fact that, save for the shrouding of her massy hair, she stood unclad. Forgotten the wreck, the desolation everywhere.

"Oh, thank Heaven!" she gasped.

There, in that inner office, half-rising from the wreck of many things that had been and were now no more, her startled eyes beheld the figure of a man—of Allan Stern!

He lived!

He peered at her with eyes that saw not, yet; toward her he groped a vague, unsteady hand.

He lived!

Not quite alone in this world-ruin, not all alone was she!

## 2. REALIZATION

THE JOY IN Beatrice's eyes gave way to poignant wonder as she gazed on him. Could this be he?

Yes, well she knew it was. She recognized him even through the grotesquery of his clinging rags, even behind the mask of a long, red, dusty beard and formidable mustache, even despite the wild and staring incoherence of his whole expression.

Yet how incredible the metamorphosis! There flashed to her a memory of this man, her other-time employer—keen and smooth-shaven, alert, well-dressed, self-centered, dominant. The master of a hundred complex problems, the directing mind of engineering works innumerable.

Faltering and uncertain now he stood there. Then, at the sound of the girl's voice, he staggered toward her with outflung hands. He stopped, and for a moment stared at her.

For he had had no time as yet to correlate his thoughts, to pull himself together.

And, while one's heart might throb ten times, Beatrice saw terror in his blinking, bloodshot eyes.

But almost at once the engineer got a mastery over himself. Even as Beatrice watched him, breathlessly, from the door, she saw his fear die out; she saw his courage well up fresh and strong.

It was almost as though something tangible were limning the man's soul upon his face. She thrilled at sight of him.

And though for a long moment no word was spoken, while the man and woman stood looking at each other like two children in some dread and unfamiliar attic, an understanding leaped between them.

Then, womanlike, instinctively as she breathed, the girl ran to him. Forgetful of every convention and of her disarray, she seized his hand. And in a voice that trembled till it broke she cried:

"What is it? What does all this mean? Tell me!"

She clung to him.

"Tell me the truth and save me! Is it *real*?"

Stern looked at her wonderingly. He smiled a strange, wan, mirthless smile.

He looked all about him. Then his lips moved, but for the moment no sound came.

He made another effort, this time successful.

"There, there," said he huskily, as though the dust and dryness of the innumerable years had got into his very voice. "There, now, don't be afraid.

"Something seems to have taken place here while—we've been asleep. What? What is it? I don't know yet. I'll find out. There's nothing to be alarmed about, at any rate."

"But—look!" She pointed at the hideous desolation.

"Yes, I see. But no matter. You're alive. I'm alive. That's two of us, anyhow. Maybe there are a lot more. We'll soon see. Whatever it may be, we'll win."

He turned and, trailing rags and streamers of rotten cloth that once had been a business suit, he waded through the confusion of wreckage on the floor, to the window.

If you have seen a weather-beaten scarecrow flapping in the wind, you have some notion of his outward guise. No tramp you ever laid eyes on could have offered so preposterous an appearance.

Down over his shoulders, fell the matted, dusty hair. His tangled beard reached far below his waist. Even his eyebrows, naturally rather light, had grown to a heavy thatch above his eyes.

Except that he was not gray or bent, and that he still seemed to have kept the resilient force of vigorous manhood, you might have thought him some incredibly ancient Rip Van Winkle come to life upon that singular stage, there in the tower.

But he gave little time to introspection or the matter of his own appearance. With one quick gesture he swept away the shrouding tangle of webs, spiders, and dead flies that obscured the window. He peered out.

"Good heavens!" he cried, and started back.

The girl ran to him.

"What is it?" she exclaimed breathlessly.

"Why, I don't know—yet. But this is something *big!* Something universal! It's—it's—no, no, you'd better not look out. Not just yet."

"I must know everything. Let me see."

Now she was at his side, and, like him, staring out into the clear sunshine, out over the vast expanses of the city.

A moment's utter silence fell. Quite clearly hummed the protest of an imprisoned fly in a web at the top of the window. The breathing of the man and woman sounded quick and loud.

"All—wrecked?" cried Beatrice. "But—then—"

"Wrecked? It looks that way," the engineer answered, holding his emotions in control with a strong effort. "Why not be frank about this?"

You'd better make up your mind at once to accept the very worst. I see no signs of anything else."

"The worst? You mean—"

"I mean just what we see out there. You can interpret it as well as I."

Again the silence while they looked, with emotions that could find no voicing in words. Instinctively the engineer passed an arm about the frightened girl and drew her close to him.

"And the last thing I remembered," she whispered, "was just—just after you'd finished dictating those Taunton Bridge specifications. I suddenly felt—oh, so sleepy! Only for a minute, I thought, I'd close my eyes and rest, and then—then—"

"*This?*"

She nodded.

"Same here," said he. "What the deuce can have struck us? Us and everybody, and everything? Talk about your problems! Lucky I'm sane and sound, and—and—"

He did not finish, but fell once more to studying the incomprehensible prospect.

Their view was toward the east, out over the river and the reaches of what had once upon a time been Long Island City and Brooklyn. As familiar a scene in the other days as could be possibly imagined. But now how altered an aspect greeted them!

"It's surely all wiped out, all gone, gone into ruins," said Stern slowly and carefully, weighing every word. "No hallucination about that." He swept the sky-line with his eyes, that now peered keenly out from beneath those bushy brows. Instinctively he brought his hand up to his breast. He started with surprise.

"What's this?" he cried. "Why! I—I've got a full yard of whiskers. My good Lord! Whiskers on *me*? And I used to say—"

He burst out laughing. He plucked at his beard with merriment that jangled horribly on the girl's tense nerves. Suddenly he grew serious. For the first time he seemed to take clear notice of his companion's disarray.

"Why, what a time it must have been!" he cried. "Here's some calculation all cut out for me, all right. But you can't go that way, Miss Kendrick. It won't do, you know. Got to have something to put on. Great Heavens, what a situation!"

He tried to peel off his remnant of a coat, but at the merest touch it tore to shreds and fell away. The girl restrained him.

"Never mind," she said, with quiet, modest dignity. "My hair protects me very well for the present. If you and I are all that's left of all the people in the world, this is no time for trifles."

He studied her a moment. Then he nodded, and grew very grave.



"Forgive me," he whispered, laying a hand on her shoulder. Once more he turned to the window and looked out.

"So, then, it's all gone?" he said, speaking as to himself. "Only a skyscraper standing here or there? And the bridges and the islands—all changed.

"Not a sign of life anywhere; not a sound; the forests growing thick among the ruins? A dead world if—if all the world is like this part of it! All dead, except *you* and *me*!"

In silence they stood there, striving to realize the full import of the catastrophe. And Stern, deep down in his heart, caught some glimmering insight of the future and was glad.

### 3. ON THE TOWER PLATFORM

SUDDENLY THE GIRL started, rebelling against the evidence of her own senses, striving again to force upon herself the belief that, after all, that which she saw could not be so.

"No, no, no!" she cried. "This can't be true. It mustn't be. There's a mistake somewhere. This simply must be all an illusion, a dream.

"If the whole world's dead, how does it happen *we're* alive?" How do we know it's dead? Can we see it all from here? Why, all we see is just a little segment of things. Perhaps if we could know the truth, look farther, and know—•"

The man shook his head.

"I guess you'll find it's real enough," he answered, "no matter how far you look. But, just the same, it won't do any harm to extend our radius of observation.

"Come, let's go on up to the top of the tower, up to the observation-platform. The quicker we know all the available facts the better. Now, if I only had a telescope."

He thought hard for a moment, then turned and strode over to a heap of friable disintegration that lay where once his instrument case has stood, containing his surveying tools.

Down on his ragged knees he fell; his rotten shreds of clothing tore and ripped at every movement, like so much water-soaked paper.

A strange, hairy, dust-covered figure, he knelt there. Quickly he plunged his hands into the rubbish and began pawing it over and over with eager haste.

"Ah!" he cried with triumph. "Thank heavens, brass and lenses haven't crumbled yet!"

He stood up again. In his hand the girl saw a peculiar telescope.

"My 'level,' see?" he exclaimed, holding it up to view. "The wooden tripod's long since gone. The fixtures that held it on won't bother me much.

"Neither will the spirit-glass on top. The main thing is that the telescope itself seems to be still intact. Now we'll see."

Speaking, he dusted off the eye-piece and the objective with a bit of rag from his coat-sleeve.

Beatrice noted that the brass tubes were all eaten and pitted with verdigris, but they still held firmly. And the lenses, when Stern had finished cleaning them, showed as bright and clear as ever.

"Come, now; come with me," he said.

Out through the doorway into the hall he made his way, while the girl followed. As she went she gathered her wondrous veil of hair more closely about her.

In this universal disorganization, this wreck of all the world, how little the conventions counted!

Together, picking their way up the broken stairs, where now the rust-bitten steel showed through the corroded stone and cement in a thousand places, they cautiously climbed.

Here, spider-webs thickly shrouded the way, and had to be brushed down. There, still more bats hung and chattered in protest as the intruders passed.

A fluffy little white owl blinked at them from a dark niche; and, well toward the top of the climb, they flushed up a score of mud-swallows which had ensconced themselves comfortably along a broken balustrade.

At last, however, despite all unforeseen incidents of this sort, they reached the upper platform, nearly a thousand feet above the earth.

Out through the relics of the revolving-door they crept, he leading, testing each foot of the way before the girl. They reached the narrow platform of red tiling that surrounded the tower.

Even here they saw with growing amazement that the hand of time and of this maddening mystery had laid its heavy imprint.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing. "What this all means we don't know yet. How long it's been we can't tell. But, to judge by the appearance up here, it's even longer than I thought. See, the very tiles are cracked and crumbling.

"Tilework is usually considered highly recalcitrant, but this is gone. There's grass growing in the dust that's settled between the tiles. And—why, here's a young oak that's taken root and forced a dozen slabs out of place!"

"The winds and birds have carried seeds up here, and acorns," she answered in an awed voice. "Think of the time that must have passed. Years and years.

"But tell me," and her brow wrinkled with a sudden wonder, "tell me how we've ever lived so long? I can't understand it.

"Not only have we escaped starvation, but we haven't frozen to death in all these bitter winters. How can that have happened?"

"Let it all go as suspended animation till we learn the facts, if we ever do," he replied, glancing about with keenest wonder.

"You know, of course, how toads have been known to live imbedded in rock for centuries? How fish, hard-frozen, have been brought to life again? Well—"

"But *we* are human beings."

"I know. Certain unknown natural forces, however, might have made no more of us than of non-mammalian and less highly organized creatures.

"Don't bother your head about these problems yet a while. On my word, we've got enough to do for the present without much caring about the how or why.

"All we definitely know is that some very long, undetermined period of time has passed, leaving us still alive. The rest can wait."

"How long a time do you judge it?" she anxiously inquired.

"Impossible to say at once. But it must have been something extraordinary. Probably far longer than either of us suspects.

"See, for example, the attrition of everything up here exposed to the weather." He pointed at the heavy stone railing. "See how *that* is wrecked, for instance."

A whole segment, indeed, had fallen inward. Its debris lay in confusion, blocking all the southern side of the platform.

The bronze bars, which Stern well remembered—two at each corner, slanting downward and bracing the rail—had now wasted to mere pock-marked shells of metal.

These had broken entirely and sagged wantonly awry with the displacement of the stone blocks, between which the vines and grasses had long been carrying on their destructive work.

"Look out!" Stern cautioned. "Don't lean against any of those stones." Firmly he held her back as she, eagerly inquisitive, started to advance toward the railing.

"Don't go anywhere near the edge. It may all be rotten and undermined, for anything we know. Keep back here, close to the wall."

Sharply, he inspected it a moment.

"Facing-stones are all pretty well gone," said he, "but so far as I can see, the steel frame isn't too bad. Putting everything together, I'll probably be able before long to make some sort of calculation of the date. But for now we'll have to call it 'X,' and let it go at that."

"The year X!" she whispered under her breath. "Good Heavens, am I as old as that?"

He made no answer, but only drew her to him protectingly, while all about them the warm summer wind swept onward to the sea, out over the sparkling expanses of the bay—alone unchanged in all that universal wreckage.

In the breeze the girl's heavy masses of hair stirred luringly. The man felt its silken caress on his half-naked shoulder, and in his ears the blood began to pound with strange insistence.

Quite gone now the daze and drowsiness of the first waking. Stern did not even feel weak or shaken. On the contrary, never had life bounded more warmly, more fully, in his veins.

The presence of the girl set his heart throbbing heavily, but he bit his lip and restrained his every untoward thought.

Only his arm tightened a little about that warmly clinging body. Beatrice did not shrink from him. She needed his protection as never since the world began had woman needed man.

To her it seemed that, come what might, his strength and comfort could not fail. And despite everything, she could not—for the moment—find unhappiness within her heart.

Quite vanished now, even in those brief minutes since their awakening, was all consciousness of their former relationship—employer and employed.

The self-contained, courteous, yet unapproachable, engineer had disappeared.

Now, through all the extraneous disguises of his outer self, there lived and breathed just a man, a young man, thewed with the vigor of his plenitude. All else had been swept clean away by this great change.

The girl was different, too. Was this strong woman, eager-eyed and brave, the quiet, low-voiced stenographer he remembered, busy only with her machine, her file-boxes, and her carbon-copies? Stern dared not realize the transmutation. He ventured hardly to fringe it in his thoughts.

To divert his wonderings and to ease a situation which oppressed him, he began adjusting the "level" telescope to his eye.

With his back planted firmly against the tower, he studied a wide section of the dead and buried world so very far below them. With astonishment he cried:

"It *is* true, Beatrice! Everything's swept clean away. Nothing left, nothing at all—no sign of life!

"As far as I can reach with these lenses, universal ruin. We're all alone in this whole world, just you and I—and everything belongs to us!"

"Everything—all ours?"

"Everything! Even the future—the future of the human race!"

Suddenly he felt her tremble at his side. He looked down at her, a great new tenderness possessing him. He saw that tears were forming in her eyes.

Then Beatrice pressed both hands to her face and bowed her head. Filled with strange emotions, the man watched her for a moment.

Then in silence, realizing the uselessness of any words, knowing that in this monstrous Ragnarjok of all humanity no ordinary relations of life could bear either cogency or meaning, he took her in his arms.

And there alone with her, far above the ruined world, high in the pure air of mid-heaven, he comforted the girl with words till then unthought-of and unknown to him.

#### 4. THE CITY OF DEATH

PRESENTLY BEATRICE grew calmer. For though grief and terror still weighed upon her soul, she realized that this was no fit time to yield to any weakness—now when a thousand things were pressing for accomplishment, if their own lives, too, were not presently to be snuffed out in all this universal death.

"Come, come," said Stern reassuringly. "I want you, too, to get a complete idea of what has happened. From now on you must know all, share all, with me." And, taking her by the hand, he led her along the crumbling and uncertain platform.

Together, very cautiously, they explored the three sides of the platform still unchoked by ruins.

Out over the incredible mausoleum of civilization they peered. Now and again they aided their vision with the telescope.

Nowhere, as he had said, was any slightest sign of life to be discerned. Nowhere a thread of smoke arose; nowhere a sound that echoed upward.

Dead lay the city, between its rivers, whereon now no sail glinted in the sunlight, no tug puffed vehemently with plumy jets of steam, no liner idled at anchor or nosed its slow course out to sea.

The Jersey shore, the Palisades, the Bronx, and Long Island all lay buried in dense forests of conifers and oak, with only here or there some skeleton mockery of a steel structure jutting through.

The islands in the harbor, too, were thickly overgrown. With a gasp of dismay and pain, Beatrice pointed out the fact that Liberty no longer held her bronze torch aloft. Save for a black, misshapen mass protruding through the tree-tops, Miss Liberty, the huge gift of France, was no more.

Fringing the water-front, all the way round, the mournful remains of the docks and piers lay in a mere sodden jumble of decay, with an occasional hulk sunk alongside.

Even over these wrecks of liners, vegetation was growing rank and green. All the wooden ships, barges, and schooners had utterly vanished.

The telescope showed only a stray, lolling mast of steel, here or yonder, thrusting up from the desolation, like a mute appealing hand raised to a Heaven that responded not.

"See," remarked Stern, "up-town almost all the buildings seem to have crumpled in upon themselves, or to have fallen outward into the streets. What an inconceivable tangle of wreckage those streets must be!

"And, do you notice the park hardly shows at all? Everything's so overgrown with trees you can't tell where it begins or ends. Nature has got her revenge at last, on man."

"The universal claim, made real," said Beatrice. "Those rather clearer lines of green, I suppose, must be the larger streets. See how the avenues stretch away and away, like ribbons of green velvet.

"Everywhere that roots can hold at all, Mother Nature has set up her flags again. Listen! What's that?"

A moment they listened intently. Up to them, from very far, rose a wailing cry, tremulous, long-drawn, formidable.

"Oh! Then there *are* people, after all?" faltered the girl, grasping Stern's arm.

He laughed.

"No, hardly," answered he. "I see you don't know the wolf-cry. I didn't, till I heard it in the Hudson Bay country, last winter—that is, last winter, plus X. Not very pleasant, is it?"

"Wolves! Then—there are—"

"Why not? Probably all sorts of game on the island now. Why shouldn't there be? All in Mother Nature's stock-in-trade, you know.

"But come, come, don't let that worry you. We're safe, for the present. Time enough to consider hunting later. Let's creep around here to the other side of the tower, and see what we can see."

Silently she agreed. Together they reached the southern part of the platform, making their way as far as the jumbled rocks of the fallen railing would permit.

Very carefully they progressed, fearful every moment lest the support break beneath them and hurl them down along the sloping side of the pinnacle to death.

"Look!" said Stern, pointing. "That very long green line there used to be Broadway. Quite a respectable forest of Arden now, isn't it?" He swept his hand far outward.

"See those steel cages, those tiny, far-off ones with daylight shining through? And the bridges, look at those!"

She shivered at the desolate sight. Only the towers of the Brooklyn Bridge were standing.

The watchers, two isolated castaways on their islands in the sea of uttermost desolation, beheld a dragging mass of wreckage that drooped from these towers on either shore, down into the sparkling flood.

The other bridges, newer and stronger far, still remained standing. But even from that distance Stern could quite plainly see, without the telescope, that the Williamsburg Bridge had "buckled" downward, and that the farther span of the Blackwelder's Island Bridge was in ruinous disrepair.

"How horrible, how ghastly is all this waste and ruin!" thought the engineer. "Yet, even in their overthrow, how wonderful are the works of man!"

A vast wonder seized him as he stood there gazing; a fierce desire to rehabilitate all this wreckage, to set it right, to start the wheels of the world-machinery running once more.

At the thought of his own powerlessness a bitter smile curled his lips. Beatrice seemed to share something of his wonder.

"Can it be possible," she whispered, "that you and I are really like Macaulay's lone watcher of the world-wreck on London Bridge?"

"That we are actually seeing the thing so often dreamed of by prophets and poets? That 'All this mighty heart is lying still,' at last—forever? The heart of the world, never to beat again?"

He made no answer, except to shake his head; but his thoughts were running fast.

So then, could he and Beatrice, just they two, be in stern reality the sole survivors of the entire human race? That race for whose material welfare he had, once on a time, done such tremendous work?

Could they be destined, he and she, to witness the closing chapter in the long, painful, glorious Book of Evolution? He shivered slightly and glanced around.

Till he could adjust his reason to the facts, could learn the truth and weigh it, he knew he must not analyze too closely; he felt he must try not to think. For that way lay madness!

Beatrice gazed far out.

The sun, declining, shot a broad glory all across the sky. Purple and gold and crimson lay the light-bands over the breast of the Hudson.

Dark blue the shadows streamed across the ruined city with its crowding forests, its blank-staring windows and sagging walls, its thousands of gaping vacancies, where wood and stone and brick had crumbled down. The city where once the tides of human life had ebbed and flowed, roaring resistlessly.

High overhead drifted a few rosy clouds, part of that changeless nature which alone did not repel or mystify these two beleaguered waifs, these chance survivors, this man, this woman, left alone together by the hand of fate.

They were dazed, fascinated by the splendor of that sunset over a world devoid of human life, for the moment giving up all efforts to judge or understand.

Stern and his mate peered closer, down at the interwoven jungles of Union Square, the leafy frond-masses that marked the one-time course of Twenty-third Street, the forest in Madison Square.

They heard their own hearts beat. The intake of their breath sounded strangely loud. Above them, on a broken cornice, some resting swallows twittered.

All at once the girl spoke.

"See the Flatiron Building over there!" she said. "What a hideous wreck!"

She took the telescope from Stern, adjusted it; and gazed minutely at the shattered pile of stone and metal.

Blotched as with leprosy stood the walls, whence many hundreds of blocks had fallen into Broadway, forming a vast moraine that for some distance choked that thoroughfare.

In numberless places the steel frame peered through. The whole roof had caved in, crushing down the upper stories, of which only a few sparse upstanding metal beams remained.

The girl's gaze was directed at a certain spot which she knew well.

"Oh, I can even see into some of the offices on the eighteenth floor!" cried she. "There; look!" And she pointed. "That one near the front! I—I used to know—"

She broke off short. In her trembling hands the telescope sank. Stern saw that she was very pale.

"Take me down!" she whispered. "I can't stand it any longer. I can't, possibly! The sight of that wrecked office! Let's go down where I can't see it!"

Gently, as though she had been a frightened child, Stern led her round the platform to the doorway, then down the crumbling stairs and so to the wreckage and dust-strewn confusion of what had been his office.

And there, his hand upon her shoulder, he urged her to be courageous.

"Listen now, Beatrice," said he. "Let's try to reason this thing out together; let's try to solve this problem like two intelligent human beings.

"Just what happened, we don't know; we can't know yet a while, till I investigate. We don't even know what year this is.

"Don't know whether anybody else is still alive, anywhere in the



world. But we can find out, after we've made provision for the immediate present and formed some rational plan of life.

"If all the rest are gone, swept away, wiped out clean like figures on a slate, then why we should have happened to survive whatever it was that struck the earth, is still a riddle far beyond our comprehension."

Here he raised her face to his, noble, despite all its grotesque disfigurements. He looked into her eyes as though to read the very soul of her, to judge whether she could share this fight, could brave this coming struggle.

"All these things may yet be answered. Once I get the proper data for this series of phenomena, I can find the solution.

"Some vast world-duty may be ours, far greater, infinitely more vital than anything that either of us has ever dreamed. It's not our place, now, to mourn or fear. Rather it is to read this mystery, to meet it and to conquer."

Through her tears the girl smiled up at him, trustingly, confidently. And in the last declining rays of the sun that glinted through the window-pane, her eyes were very beautiful.

## 5. EXPLORATION

CAME NOW THE evening, as they sat and talked together, talked long and earnestly, there within that ruined place. They were too eager for some knowledge of the truth to feel hunger or to think of the conventions of clothing.

Chairs they had none, nor even so much as a broom to clean the floor with. But Stern, first-off, had wrenched a marble slab from the stairway.

And with this plane of stone still strong enough to serve, he had scraped all one corner of the office floor free of rubbish. This gave them a preliminary camping-place wherein to take their bearings and discuss what must be done.

"So then," the engineer was saying as the dusk grew deeper, "we'll apparently have to make this building our headquarters for a while.

"As nearly as I can figure, this is about what must have happened. Some sudden, deadly, numbing plague or cataclysm must have struck the earth, long, long ago.

"It may have been an almost instantaneous onset of some new and highly fatal micro-organism, propagating with such marvelous rapidity that it swept the world clean in a day—doing its work before any resistance could be organized or thought of.

"Again, some poisonous gas may have developed, either from a fissure

in the earth's crust, or otherwise. Other hypotheses are possible, but of what practical value are they now?

"We only know that here, in this uppermost office of the Tower, working late, you and I have somehow escaped with only a long period of completely suspended animation. How long? God above knows! That's a query I can't even guess the answer to as yet."

"Well, to judge by all the changes," Beatrice suggested thoughtfully, "it can't have been less than a hundred years. Great Heavens!" and she burst into a little satiric laugh. "Am I a hundred and twenty-four years old? Think of that!"

"You underestimate," Stern answered. "But no matter about the time question for the present; we can't solve it now."

"Neither can we solve the other problem about Europe and Asia and all the rest of the world. Whether London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and every other city, every other land, has shared this fate, we simply don't know."

"All we can have is a feeling of strong probability that life, human life I mean, is everywhere extinct—except right here in this room."

"Otherwise—don't you see?—men would have made their way back here again, back to New York, where all these incalculable treasures seem to have perished, and—"

He broke off short. Again, far off, they heard a faint re-echoing roar. For a moment they both sat speechless. What could it be? Some distant wall toppling down? A hungry beast scenting its prey? They could not tell. But Stern smiled.

"I guess," said he, "guns will be about the first thing I'll look for, after food. There ought to be good hunting down in the jungles of Fifth Avenue and Broadway."

"You shoot, of course? No? Well, I'll soon teach you. Lots of things both of us have got to learn now. No end of them."

He rose from his place on the floor, went over to the window and stood for a minute peering out into the gloom. Then suddenly he turned.

"What's the matter with me, anyhow?" he exclaimed with irritation. "What right have I to be staying here, theorizing, when there's work to do? I ought to be busy this very minute."

"In some way or other I've got to find food, clothing, tools, arms—a thousand things. And above all, water. And here I've been speculating about the past, fool that I am."

"You—you aren't going to leave me—not tonight?" faltered the girl.

Stern seemed not to have heard her, so strong the urge for action lay upon him now. He began to pace the floor, sliding and stumbling through the rubbish, a singular figure in his tatters, and with his patriarchal hair and beard. A figure dimly seen by the faint light that still gloomed through the window.

"In all the wreckage down below," said he, as though half to himself, "in all that vast congeries of ruin which once was called New York, surely enough must still remain intact for our small needs. Enough till we can reach the land, the country, and raise food of our own."

"Don't go now!" pleaded Beatrice. She, too, stood up, and now she stretched her hands to him. "Don't, please! We can get along some way or other till morning. At least, I can!"

"No, no, it isn't right. Down in the shops and stores, who knows but we might find—"

"But you're unarmed. And in the streets—in the forest, rather—"

"Listen," he commanded rather abruptly, "this is no time for hesitating or for weakness. I know you'll stand your share of all that we must suffer, dare, and do together.

"Some way or other I've got to make you comfortable. I've got to locate food and drink immediately. Got to get my bearings. Why, do you think I'm going to let you, even for one night, go fasting and thirsty, sleep on bare cement, and all that sort of thing?

"If so, you're mistaken! No, you must spare me for an hour or two. Inside of that time I ought to make a beginning!"

"A whole hour?"

"Two would probably be nearer it. I promise to be back inside of Jiat time."

"But," and her voice quivered just a trifle, "but suppose some wolf or bear—"

"Oh, I'm not quite so foolhardy as all that!" he retorted. "I'm not going to venture outside until tomorrow. My idea is that I can find at least a few essentials right here in this building.

"It's a city in itself—or was. Offices, stores, shops, everything right here together in a lump. It can't possibly take me very long to go down and rummage out something for your comfort.

"Now that the first shock and surprise of our awakening are over, we can't go on in this way, you know—h-m!—dressed in—well, such exceedingly primitive garb."

Silently she looked at his dim figure in the dusk. Then she stretched out her hand.

"I'll go, too," she said quite simply.

"You'd better stay, It's safer here."

"No, I'm going."

"But if we run into dangers?"

"Never mind. Take me with you."

He came over to her. He took her hand. In silence he pressed it. Thus for a moment they stood. Then, arousing himself to action, he said: "First of all, a light."

"A light? How can you make a light? Why, there isn't a match left anywhere in this whole world."

"I know, but there are other things. Probably my chemical flasks and vials aren't injured. Glass is practically imperishable. And if I'm not mistaken, the bottles must be lying somewhere in that rubbish heap over by the window."

He left her wondering, and knelt among the litter. For a while he silently delved through the triturated bits of punky wood and rust-red metal that now represented the remains of his chemical cabinet.

All at once he exclaimed: "Here's one! And here's another. This certainly is luck. H-m! Shouldn't wonder if I got almost all of them back."

One by one he found a score of thick, ground-glass vials. Some were broken, probably by the shock when they and the cabinet had fallen, but a good many still remained intact.

Among these were the two essential ones. By the last dim ghost of a light through the window, and by the sense of touch, Stern was able to make out the engraved symbols "P" and "S" on the bottles.

"Phosphorus and sulfur," he commented. "Well, what more could I reasonably ask? Here's alcohol, too, hermetically sealed. Not too bad, eh?"

While the girl watched with wondering admiration, Stern thought hard a moment. Then he set to work.

First he took a piece of the corroded metal framework of the cabinet, a steel strip about eighteen inches long, frail in places, but still sufficiently strong to serve his purpose.

Tearing off some rags from his coat-sleeve, he wadded them together into a ball as big as his fist. Around this ball he twisted the metal strip, so that it formed at once a holder and a handle for the rag-mass.

With considerable difficulty he worked the glass stopper out of the alcohol bottle, and with the fluid saturated the rags. Then, on a clear bit of floor, he spilled out a small quantity of the phosphorus and sulfur.

"This beats getting fire by friction all hollow," he cheerfully remarked. "I've tried that, too, and I guess it's only in books a white man ever succeeds at it. But this way, you see, it's simplicity itself."

Very moderate friction, with a bit of wood from the wreckage of the door, sufficed to set the phosphorus ablaze. Stern heaped on a few tiny lumps of sulfur. Then, coughing as the acrid fumes arose from the sputter of blue flame, he applied the alcohol-soaked torch.

Instantly a puff of fire shot up, colorless and clear, throwing no very satisfactory light, yet capable of dispelling the thickest of gloom.

The blaze showed Stern's eager face, long-bearded and dusty, as he bent over this crucial experiment.

The girl, watching closely, felt a strange new thrill of confidence and

solace. Some realization of the engineer's resourcefulness came to her, and in her heart she had confidence that, though the whole wide world had crumpled into ruin, yet he would find a way to smooth her path, to be a strength and refuge for her.

But Stern had no time for any but matters of intensest practicality. He rose from the floor, holding the flambeau in one hand, the bottle of alcohol in the other.

"Come now," he said, and raised the torch on high to light her way. "You're still determined to go?"

For an answer she nodded. Her eyes gleamed by the uncanny light.

And so, together, he leading out of the room and along the wrecked hall, they started on their trip of exploration out into the unknown.

## 6. TREASURE-TROVE

NEVER BEFORE had either of them realized just what the meaning of forty-eight stories might be. For all their memories of this height were associated with smooth-sliding elevators that had whisked them up as though the tremendous had been the merest trifle.

This night, however, what with the broken stairs, the debris-cumbered hallways, the lurking darkness which the torch could hardly hold back from swallowing them, they came to a clear understanding of the problem.

Every few minutes the flame burned low and Stern had to drop on more alcohol, holding the bottle high above the flame to avoid explosion.

Long before they had compassed the distance to the ground floor the girl lagged with weariness and shrank with nameless fears.

Each black doorway that yawned along their path seemed ominous with memories of life that had perished there, of death that now reigned all-supreme.

Each corner, every niche and crevice, breathed out the spirit of the past and of the mystic tragedy which in so brief a time had wiped the human race from earth, "as a mother wipes the milky lips of her child."

And Stern, though he said little except to guide Beatrice and warn her of unusual difficulties, felt the somber magic of the place. No poet, he; only a man of hard and practical details.

Yet he realized that, were he dowered with the faculty, here lay matter for an Epic of Death such as no Homer ever dreamed, no Virgil ever could have penned.

Now and then, along the corridors and down the stairways, they chanced on curious little piles of dust, scattered at random in fantastic shapes.

These for a few minutes puzzled Stern, till stooping, he stirred one

with his hand. Something he saw there made him start back with a stifled exclamation.

"What is it?" cried the girl, startled.

But he, realizing the nature of his discovery—he had seen a human incisor tooth, gold-filled, there in the odd little heap—straightened up quickly and assumed to smile.

"It's nothing, nothing at all," he answered. "Come, we haven't got any time to waste. If we're going to provide ourselves with even a few necessities before the alcohol's all gone, we've got to be at work."

And onward, downward, ever farther and farther, he led her through the dark maze of ruin, which did not even echo to their barefoot tread.

Like disheveled wraiths they passed, soundlessly, through eerie labyrinths and ways which might have served as types of Coleridge's "caverns measureless to man," so utterly drear they stretched out in their ghostly desolation.

At length, after an eternal time of weariness and labor, they managed to make their way down into the ruins of the famous and once beautiful arcade which had formerly run from Madison Avenue to the square.

"Oh, how horrible!" gasped Beatrice, shrinking, as they clambered down the stairs and emerged into this scene of chaos, darkness, death.

Where once the arcade had stretched its path of light and life and beauty, of wealth and splendor, like an epitome of civilization all gathered in that constricted space, the little light disclosed stark horror.

Feeble as a will-o'-the-wisp in that enshrouding dark, the torch now showed only hints of things. Here a fallen pillar, there a shattered mass of wreckage where a huge section of the ceiling had fallen. Yonder a gaping aperture left by the disintegration of a wall.

Through all this rubbish and confusion, over and through a score of the little dust-piles which Stern had so carefully avoided explaining to Beatrice, they climbed and waded, and with infinite pains slowly advanced.

"What we need is more light!" exclaimed the engineer presently. "We've got to have a bonfire here!"

And before long he had collected a considerable pile of wood, ripped from doorways, and window-casings of the arcade. This he set fire to, in the middle of the floor.

Soon a dull, wavering glow began to paint itself upon the walls, and to fling the comrades' shadows, huge and weird, in dancing mockery across the desolation.

Strangely enough, many of the large plate-glass windows lining the arcade still stood intact. The glittered with the uncanny reflections of the fire as the man and woman slowly made way down the passage.

"See!" exclaimed Stern, pointing. "See all these ruined shops? Probably

almost everything is worthless. But there must be some things left that we can use.

"Think of the millions in real money, gold and silver, in the safes all over the city—in the banks and vaults! Millions! Billions!

"Jewels, diamonds; wealth simply inconceivable. Yet now a good water supply, some bread, meat, coffee, salt, and so on, a couple of beds, a gun or two and some ordinary tools would outweigh them all."

"Clothes, too," the girl suggested. "Plain cotton cloth is worth ten million dollars an inch now."

"Right," answered Stern, gazing about him with wonder. "And I offer a bushel of diamonds for a razor and a pair of scissors." Grimly he smiled as he stroked his enormous beard.

"But come, this won't do. There'll be plenty of time to look around and discuss things in the morning. Let's get busy!"

Thus began their search for a few prime necessities of life, there in that charnel-house of civilization, by the dull reflections of the firelight and the pallid torch glow.

Though they forced their way into ten or twelve of the arcade shops, they found no clothing, no blankets or fabric of any kind that would serve to cover them or to sleep upon. Everything at all in the nature of cloth had either sunk back into moldering annihilation or had at best grown far too fragile to be of the slightest service.

They found, however, a furrier's shop, and this they entered eagerly.

A few warped fragments of skins still hung from rusted metal hooks, moth-eaten, riddled with holes, ready to crumble at the merest touch.

"There's nothing in any of these to help us," judged Stern. "But maybe we might find something else in here."

Carefully they searched the littered place, all dust and horrible disarray, which made sad mockery of the gold-leaf sign still visible on the window: "Adele, Importer. All the Latest Novelties."

On the floor Stern discovered three more of those little dust-middens which meant human bodies. Pitiful remnants of an extinct race, of unknown people in the long ago. What had he now in common with them? The remains did not even inspire repugnance in him.

All at once Beatrice uttered a cry of startled gladness.

"Look here! A storage chest!"

True enough, there stood a cedar box, all seamed and cracked and bulging, yet still retaining a semblance of its original shape.

The copper bindings and the lock were still quite plainly to be seen, as the engineer held the torch close, though green and corroded with incredible age.

One effort of Stern's powerful arms sufficed to tip the chest quite over.

As it fell it burst, and disintegrated into a mass of pulverized, worm-eaten splinters.

Out rolled furs, many and many of them, black, and yellow, and striped—the pelts of the grizzly, of the leopard, the cheetah, the royal bengal himself.

"Hurray!" shouted the man, catching up first one, then another, and still a third. "Almost intact. A little imperfection here and there doesn't matter. Now we've got clothes and a bed—beds, I mean.

"What's that? Yes, maybe they are a trifle warm for this season of the year, but this is no time to be particular. See, how do you like *that*?"

As he spoke, he flung the tiger-skin over the girl's shoulders.

"Magnificent!" he judged, standing back a pace or two and holding up the torch to see her better. "When I find you a big gold pin or clasp to fasten that at the throat, you'll make a picture of another and more splendid Boadicea!"

He tried to laugh at his own words, but merriment seemed out of place there, and with such a subject. For the woman, clad this way, had suddenly assumed a wild, barbaric beauty.

Bright gleamed her gray eyes by the light of the flambeau; limpid, and deep, and earnest, they looked at Stern. Her wonderful hair, shaken out in bewildering masses over the striped, tawny savagery of the robe, made colorful contrasts, barbarous, seductive.

Half hidden, the woman's perfect body, beautiful as that of a wood-nymph or a pagan dryad, roused atavistic passions in the engineer.

He dared speak no other word for the moment, but bent beside the shattered chest again and fell to looking over all the furs.

A polar-bear skin attracted his attention and this he chose. Then, with it slung across his shoulder, he stood up.

"Come," said he, steadying his voice with an effort, "come, we must be going now. Our light won't hold out very much longer. We've got to find food and drink before the alcohol's all gone; got to look out for practical affairs, whatever happens. Well, let's be going."

Fortune favored them.

In the wreck of a small fancy grocer's booth down toward the end of the arcade, they came upon a stock of goods in glass jars.

All the tinned foods had long since perished, but the impermeable glass seemed to have preserved fruits and vegetables of the finer sort, and chipped beef and the like, in a state of perfect soundness.

Best of all, they discovered the remains of a case of mineral water. The case had crumbled to dust, but fourteen bottles of water were still intact.

"Pile three or four of these into my fur robe here," directed Stern.



"No, a few of the other jars—that's right. Tomorrow we'll come down and clean up the whole stock. But we've got enough for now.

"We'd best be getting back up the stairs again," said he. And so they started.

"Are you going to leave that fire burning?" asked the girl, as they passed the middle of the arcade.

"Yes. It can't do any harm. Nothing to catch here; only old metal and cement. Besides, it would take too much time and labor to put it out."

They abandoned the gruesome place and began the long, exhausting climb.

It must have taken them an hour and a half at least to reach their aerie. They found their strength taxed to the utmost.

Before they were much more than halfway up, the ultimate drop of alcohol had been burned.

The last few hundred feet had to be made by slow, laborious feeling, aided only by such dim reflections of the gibbous moon as glimmered through a window, cobweb-hung, or through some break in the walls.

At length, however—for all things have an end—breathless and spent, they found their refuge. And soon after that, clad in their savage robes, they ate.

Allan Stern, consulting engineer, and Beatrice Kendrick, stenographer, now king and queen of the whole wide world domain (as they feared) sat together by a little blaze of punky wood fragments that flickered on the eroded floor.

They ate with their fingers and drank out of the bottles, without apology. Strange were their speculations, their wonderings, their plans—now discussed specifically, now half-voiced by a mere word that thrilled them both with sudden, poignant emotion.

And so an hour passed, and night deepened toward the birth of another day. The fire burned low and died, for they had little to replenish it with.

Down sank the moon, her pale light dimming as she went, her faint illumination wanly creeping across the disordered, wrack-strewn floor.

And at length Stern, in the outer office, Beatrice in the other, they wrapped themselves within their furs and laid them down to sleep.

Despite the age-long trance from which they both had but so recently emerged, a strange lassitude weighed on them.

Yet long after Beatrice had lost herself in dreams, Stern lay and thought strange thoughts, yearning and eager thoughts, there in the impenetrable gloom.

# POLARIS OF THE SNOWS

by Charles B. Stilson

For Charles Billings Stilson was one of the earliest and most effective imitators of Edgar Rice Burroughs. *Polaris of the Snows* and its two sequels established his reputation, and he returned to the writing of science fiction and fantasy often, though he found a ready market for westerns and other types of fiction.

He was an ingenious storyteller but only an average stylist. Nevertheless, some of his stories would gain a good reception if reprinted today. *A Man Named Jones* (ALL-STORY WEEKLY, October 25, 1919 to November 22, 1919), of a whacky set of characters in search of an emerald mine, and its sequel, *Land of the Shadow People* (ALL-STORY WEEKLY, June 26, 1920 to ARGOSY-ALL-STORY WEEKLY, July 24, 1920), of the race of Indians whose coloring changes chameleonlike with their surroundings, are outstanding entertainment.

He was as facile at the short story as the novel. *Yedra of the Painted Desert* (ALL-STORY WEEKLY, May 10, 1919), perhaps his most literary work, tells with beauty and poignancy the experience of a man lost in the desert who finds an idyllic oasis inhabited by a beautiful girl who has never seen civilization; *Dr. Martone's Microscope* (ALL-STORY WEEKLY, March 27, 1920) mentions in its context that it was inspired by Ray Cummings' *The Girl in the Golden Atom*; perhaps his most famous short story, *The Sky Woman* (ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY, September 25, 1920), features a woman who has traveled to earth from another planet.

During his writing career, he had published a number of hardcover books from the pages of the Munsey magazines: *Black Wolf of Picardy* as *The Ace of Blades*; *Son of the Black Wolf* as *Swordplay*; and *The Centaur of Navarre* as *Cavalier of Navarre*; fine adventures of old France, but none of his fantasy novels achieved this distinction.

He never was among Munsey's higher-paid authors, despite his popularity with the readers. He received four-hundred dollars for the 59,000 words of *Polaris of the Snows*; four-hundred dollars for its sequel, *Minos of Sardanés*, which was of comparable length; and seven-hundred dollars for *Polaris and the Goddess Glorian*, an 84,000-worder. At his best he never was paid more than two cents a word. Yet of all Burroughs imitators, he was the most effective, probably because he was fundamentally a storyteller. The efficacy of his method may be sampled in the opening chapters of *Polaris of the Snows*, where the hero kills polar bears with little more than his muscles and a knife, discovers a stranded American girl in the antarctic, and eventually casts his lot with a lost civilization in the ice wilderness. The episodes presented offer the authentic feel of the setting and situation of the novel, which inspired two highly popular sequels.

"NORTH! NORTH! To the north, Polaris. Tell the world—ah, tell them—boy—The north! The north! You must go, Polaris!"

Throwing the covers from his low couch, the old man arose and stood, a giant, tottering figure. Higher and higher he towered. He tossed his arms high, his features became convulsed; his eyes glazed. In his throat the rising tide of dissolution choked his voice to a hoarse rattle. He swayed.

With a last desperate rallying of his failing powers he extended his right arm and pointed to the north. Then he fell, as a tree falls, quivered, and was still.

His companion bent over the pallet, and with light, sure fingers closed his eyes. In all the world he knew, Polaris never had seen a human being die. In all the world he now was utterly alone!

He sat down at the foot of the cot, and for many minutes gazed steadily at the wall with fixed, unseeing eyes. A sputtering little lamp, which stood on a table in the center of the room, flickered and went out. The flames of the fireplace played strange tricks in the strange room. In their uncertain glare, the features of the dead man seemed to writhe uncannily.

Garments and hangings of the skins of beasts stirred in the wavering shadows, as though the ghosts of their one-time tenants were struggling to reassert their dominion. At the one door and the lone window the wind whispered, fretted, and shrieked. Snow as fine and hard as the sands of the sea rasped across the panes. Somewhere without a dog howled—the long, throaty ululation of the wolf breed. Another joined in,

and another, until a full score of canine voices wailed a weird requiem.

Unheeding, the living man sat as still as the dead.

Once, twice, thrice, a little clock struck a halting, uncertain stroke. When the fourth hour was passed it rattled crazily and stopped. The fire died away to embers; the embers paled to ashes. As though they were aware that something had gone awry, the dogs never ceased their baying. The wind rose higher and higher, and assailed the house with repeated shocks. Pale-gray and changeless day that lay across a sea of snows peered furtively through the windows.

At length the watcher relaxed his silent vigil. He arose, cast off his coat of white furs, stepped to the wall of the room opposite to the door, and shoved back a heavy wooden panel. A dark aperture was disclosed. He disappeared and came forth presently, carrying several large chunks of what appeared to be crumbling black rock.

He threw them on the dying fire, where they snapped briskly, caught fire, and flamed brightly. They were coal.

From a platform above the fireplace he dragged down a portion of the skinned carcass of a walrus. With the long, heavy-bladed knife from his belt he cut it into strips. Laden with the meat, he opened the door and went out into the dim day.

The house was set against the side of a cliff of solid, black, lusterless coal. A compact stockade of great boulders enclosed the front of the dwelling. From the back of the building, along the base of the cliff, ran a low shed of timber slabs, from which sounded the howling and worrying of the dogs.

As Polaris entered the stockade the clamor was redoubled. The rude plank at the front of the shed, which was its door, was shaken repeatedly as heavy bodies were hurled against it.

Kicking an accumulation of loose snow away from the door, the man took from its racks the bar which made it fast and let it drop forward. A reek of steam floated from its opening. A shaggy head was thrust forth, followed immediately by a great, gray body, which shot out as if propelled from a catapult.

Catching in its jaws the strip of flesh which the man dangled in front of the doorway, the brute dashed across the stockade and crouched against the wall, tearing at the meat. Dog after dog piled pell-mell through the doorway, until at least twenty-five grizzled animals were distributed about the enclosure, bolting their meal of walrus-flesh.

For a few moments the man sat on the roof of the shed and watched the animals. Although the raw flesh stiffened in the frigid air before even the jaws of the dogs could devour it and the wind cut like the lash of a whip, the man, coatless and with head and arms bared, seemed to mind neither the cold nor the blast.

He had not the ruggedness of figure or the great height of the man who lay dead within the house. He was of considerably more than *medium height, but so broad of shoulder and deep of chest that he seemed short.* Every line of his compact figure bespoke unusual strength—the wiry, swift strength of an animal.

His arms, white and shapely, rippled with muscles at the least movement of his fingers. His hand were small, but powerfully shaped. His neck was straight and not *long. The thews spread from it to his wide shoulders like* those of a splendid athlete. The ears were set close above the angle of a firm jaw, and were nearly hidden in a mass of tawny, yellow hair, as fine as a woman's, which swept over his shoulders.

Above a square chin were full lips and a thin, aquiline nose. Deep, brown eyes, fringed with black lashes, made a marked contrast with the fairness of his complexion and his yellow hair and brows. He was not more than twenty-four years old.

Presently he re-entered the house. The dogs flocked after him to the door, whining and rubbing against his legs, but he allowed none of them to enter with him. He stood before the dead man and, for the first time in many hours, he spoke:

"For this day, my father, you have waited many years. I shall not delay. I will not fail you."

From a skin sack he filled the small lamp with oil and lighted its wick with a splinter of blazing coal. He set it where its feeble light shone on the face of the dead. Lifting the corpse, he composed its limbs and wrapped it in the great white pelt of a polar bear, tying it with many thongs. Before he hid from view the quiet features he stood back with folded arms and bowed head.

"I think he would have wished this," he whispered, and he sang softly that grand old hymn which has sped so many Christian soldiers from their battlefield. "Nearer, My God, to Thee," he sang in a subdued, melodious baritone. From a shelf of books which hung on the wall he reached a leather-covered volume. "It was his religion," he muttered: "It may be mine," and he read from the book: *"I am the resurrection and the Hie, whoso believeth in Me, even though he died—"* and on through the sonorous burial service.

He dropped the book within the folds of the bearskin, covered the dead face, and made fast the robe. Although the body was of great weight, he shouldered it without apparent effort, took the lamp in one hand, and passed through the panel in the wall.

Within the bowels of the cliff a large cavern had been hollowed in the coal. In a far corner a gray boulder had been hewn into the shape of a tombstone. On its face were carved side by side two words: "Anne" and

"Stephen." At the foot of the stone were a mound and an open grave. He laid the body in the grave and covered it with earth and loose coal.

Again he paused, while the lamplight shone on the tomb.

"May you rest in peace, O Anne, my mother, and Stephen, my father. I never knew you, my mother, and, my father, I knew not who you were nor who I am. I go to carry your message."

He rolled boulders onto the two mounds. The opening to the cave he walled up with other boulders, piling a heap of them and of large pieces of coal until it filled the low arch of the entrance.

In the cabin he made preparations for a journey.

One by one he threw on the fire books and other articles within the room, until little was left but skins and garments of fur and an assortment of barbaric weapons of the chase.

Last he dragged from under the cot a long, oaken chest.

Failing to find its key, he tore the lid from it with his strong hands.

Some articles of feminine wearing apparel which were within it he handled reverently, and at the same time curiously; for they were of cloth. Wonderingly he ran his fingers over silk and fine laces. Those he also burned.

From the bottom of the chest he took a short, brown rifle and a brace of heavy revolvers of a pattern and caliber famous in the annals of the plainsmen. With them were belt and holsters.

He counted the cartridges in the belt. Forty there were, and in the chambers of the revolvers and the magazine of the rifle, eighteen more. Fifty-eight shots with which to meet the perils that lay between himself and that world of men to the north—if, indeed, the passing years had not spoiled the ammunition.

He divested himself of his clothing, bathed with melted snow-water, and dressed himself anew in white furs. An omelet of eggs of wild birds and a cutlet of walrus-flesh sufficed to stay his hunger, and he was ready to face the unknown.

In the stockade was a strongly build sledge. Polaris packed it with quantities of meat both fresh and dried, of which there was a large store in the cabin. What he did not pack on the sledge he threw to the eager dogs.

He laid his harness out on the snow, cracked his long whip, and called up his team. "Octavius, Nero, Julius." Three powerful brutes bounded to him and took their places in the string. "Juno, Hector, Pallas." Three more grizzled snow-runners sprang into line. "Marcus." The great, gray leader trotted sedately to the place at the head of the team. A seven-dog team it was, all of them bearing the names before which Rome and Greece had bowed.

Polaris added to the burden of the sledge the brown rifle, several spears, carved from oaken beams and tipped with steel, and a sealskin filled with boiled snow-water. On his last trip into the cabin he took from a drawer in the table a small, flat packet, sewn in membranous parchment.

"This is to tell the world my father's message and to tell who I am," he said, and hid it in an inner pocket of his vest of furs. He buckled on the revolver-belt, took whip and staff from the fireside, and drove his dog-team out of the stockade onto the prairie of snow, closing the gate on the howling chorus left behind.

He proceeded several hundred yards, then tethered his dogs with a word of admonition, and retraced his steps.

In the stockade he did a strange and terrible thing. Long used to seeing him depart from his team, the dogs had scattered and were mumbling their bones in various corners. "If I leave these behind me, they will perish miserably, or they will break out and follow, and I may not take them with me," he muttered.

From dog to dog he passed. To each he spoke a word of farewell. Each he caressed with a pat on the head. Each he killed with a single grip of his muscular hands, gripping them at the nape of the neck, where the bones parted in his powerful fingers. Silently and swiftly he proceeded until only one dog remained alive, old Paulus, the patriarch of the pack.

He bent over the animal, which raised its dim eyes to his and licked at his hands.

"Paulus, dear old friend that I have grown up with; farewell, Paulus," he said. He pressed his face against the noble head of the dog. When he raised it tears were coursing down his cheeks. Then Paulus's spirit sped.

Two by two he dragged the bodies into the cabin.

"Of old a great general in that far world of men burned his ships that he might not turn back. I will not turn back," he murmured. With a splinter of blazing coal he fired the house and the dog-shed. He tore the gate of the stockade from its hinges and cast it into the ruins. With his great strength he toppled over the capping-stones of the wall, and left it a ruin also.

## 2. THE FIRST WOMAN

PROBABLY IN ALL the world there was not the equal of the team of dogs which Polaris had selected for his journey. Their ancestors in the long ago had been the fierce, gray timberwolves of the north. Carefully cross-bred, the strains in their blood were of the wolf, the great Dane, and the mastiff; but the wolf strain held dominant. They had the loyalty

of the mastiff, the strength of the great Dane, and the tireless sinews of the wolf. From the environment of their rearing they were well furred and inured to the cold and hardships of the Antarctic. They would travel far.

Polaris did not ride on the sledge. He ran with the dogs, as swift and tireless as they. A wonderful example of the adaptability to conditions of the human race, his upbringing had given him the strength and endurance of an animal. He had never seen the dog that he could not run down.

He, too, would travel fast and far.

In the nature of the land through which they journeyed on their first dash to the northward, there were few obstacles to quick progress. It was a prairie of snow, wind-swept, and stretching like a desert as far as eye could discern. Occasionally were upcroppings of coal cliffs similar to the one where had been Polaris's home. On the first drive they made a good fifty miles.

Need of sleep, more than fatigue, warned both man and beasts of camping-time. Polaris, who seemed to have a definite point in view, urged on the dogs for an hour longer than was usual on an ordinary trip, and they came to the border of the immense snow-plain.

To the northeast lay a ridge of what appeared to be snow-covered hills. Beyond the edge of the white prairie was a forest of ice. Millions of jagged monoliths stood and lay, jammed closely together, in every conceivable shape and angle.

At some time a giant ice-flow had crashed down upon the land. It had fretted and torn at the shore, had heaved itself up, with its myriad gleaming tusks bared for destruction. Then nature had laid upon it a calm, white hand, and had frozen it quiet and still and changeless.

Away to the east a path was open, which skirted the field of broken ice and led in toward the base of the hills.

Polaris did not take that path. He turned west, following the line of the ice-belt. Presently he found what he sought. A narrow lane led into the heart of the iceberg.

At the end of it, caught in the jaws of two giant bergs, hung fast, as it had hung for years, the sorry wreck of a stout ship. Scarred and rent by the grinding of its prison-ice, and weather-beaten by the rasping of wind-driven snow in a land where the snow never melts, still on the square stern of the vessel could be read the dimming letters which spelled "Yedda."

Polaris unharnessed the pack, and man and dogs crept on board the hulk. It was but a timber shell. Much of the decking had been cut away, and everything movable had been taken from it for the building of the cabin and the shed, now in black ruins fifty miles to the south.



In an angle of the ice-wall, a few yards from the ship, Polaris pitched his camp and built a fire with timbers from the wreck. He struck his flame with a rudely fashioned tinder-box, catching the spark in fine scrapings of wood and nursing it with his breath. He fed the dogs and toasted meat for his own meal at the fire. With a large robe from the sledge he bedded the team snugly beside the fire.

With his own parka of furs he clambered aboard the ship, found a bunk in the forecastle, and curled up for the night.

Several hours later hideous clamor broke his dreamless slumber. He started from the bunk and leaped from the ship's side into the ice-lane. Every dog of the pack was bristling and snarling with rage. Mixed with their uproar was a deeper, hoarser note of anger that came from the throat of no dog—a note which the man knew well.

The team was bunched a few feet ahead of the fire as Polaris came over the rail of the ship. Almost shoulder to shoulder the seven crouched, every head pointed up the path. They were quivering from head to tail with anger, and seemed to be about to charge.

Whipping the dogs back, the son of the snows ran forward to meet the danger alone. He could afford to lose no dogs. He had forgotten the guns, but he bore weapons with which he was better acquainted.

With a long-hafted spear in his hand and the knife loosened in his belt he bounded up the pathway and stood, wary but unafraid, fronting an immense white bear.

He was not a moment too soon. The huge animal had set himself for the charge, and in another instant would have hurled its enormous weight down on the dogs. The beast hesitated, confronted by this new enemy, and sat back on its haunches to consider.

Knowing his foe aforetime, Polaris took that opportunity to deliver his own charge. He bounded forward and drove his tough spear with all his strength into the white chest below the throat. Balanced as it was on its haunches, the shock of the man's onset upset the bear, and it rolled backward, a jet of blood spurting over its shaggy coat and, dyeing the snow.

Like a flash the man followed his advantage. Before the brute could turn or recover Polaris reached its back and drove his long-bladed knife under the left shoulder. Twice he struck deep, and sprang aside. The battle was finished.

The beast made a last mighty effort to rear erect, tearing at the spear-shaft, and went down under an avalanche of snarling, ferocious dogs. For the team could refrain from conflict no longer, and charged like a flying wedge to worry the dying foe.

Replenishing his store of meat with strips from the newly slain bear,

Polaris allowed the pack to make a famous meal on the carcass. When they were ready to take the trail again, he fired the ship with a blazing brand, and they trotted forth along the snow-path to the east with the skeleton of the stout old *Yedda* roaring and flaming behind them.

For days Polaris pressed northward. To his right extended the range of the white hills. To the left was the seemingly endless ice-field that looked like the angry billows of a storm-tossed sea which had been arrested at the height of tempest, its white-capped, upthrown waves paralyzed cold and dead.

Down the shore-line, where his path lay, a fierce wind blew continuously and with increasing rigor. He was puzzled to find that instead of becoming warmer as he progressed to the north and away from the pole, the air was more frigid than it had been in his homeland. Hardy as he was, there were times when the furious blasts chilled him to the bone and when his magnificent dogs flinched and whimpered.

Still he pushed on. The sledge grew lighter as the provisions were consumed, and there were few marches that did not cover forty miles. Polaris slept with the dogs, huddled in robes. The very food they ate they must warm with the heat of their bodies before it could be devoured. There was no vestige of anything to make fuel for a camp-fire.

He had covered some hundreds of miles when he found the contour of the country was changing. The chain of the hills swung sharply away to the east, and the path broadened, fanwise, east and west. An undulating plain of snow and ice-caps, rent by many fissures, lay ahead.

This was the most difficult traveling of all.

In the middle of their second march across the plain, the man noticed that his gray snow-coursers were uneasy. They threw their snouts up to the wind and growled angrily, scenting some unseen danger. Although he had seen nothing larger than a fox since he entered the plain, bear signs had been frequent, and Polaris welcomed a hunt to replenish his larder.

He halted the team and outspanned the dogs so they would be unhampered by the sledge in case of attack. Bidding them remain behind, he went to reconnoiter.

He clambered to the summit of a snow-covered ice-crest and gazed ahead. A great joy welled into his heart, a thanksgiving so keen that it brought a mist to the eyes.

He had found man!

Not a quarter of a mile ahead of him, standing in the lee of a low ridge, were two figures unmistakably human. At the instant he saw them the wind brought to his nostrils, sensitive as those of an animal, a strange scent that set his pulses bounding. He *smelled* man and man's fire! A

thin spiral of smoke was curling over the back of the ridge. He hurried forward.

Hidden by the undulations of slopes and drifts he approached within a few feet of them without being discovered. On the point of crying aloud to them he stopped, paralyzed, and crouched behind a drift. For these men to whom his heart called madly—the first of his own kind but one whom he had ever seen—were tearing at each other's throats like maddened beasts in an effort to take life!

Like a man in a dream, Polaris heard their voices raised in curses. They struggled fiercely but weakly. They were on the brink of one of the deep fissures, or crevasses, which seamed this strange, forgotten land. Each was striving to push the other into the chasm.

Then one who seemed the stronger wrenched himself free and struck the other in the face. The stricken man staggered, threw his arms above his head, toppled, and crashed down the precipice.

Polaris's first introduction to the civilization which he sought was murder! For those were civilized white men who had fought. They wore garments of cloth. Revolvers hung from their belts. Their speech, of which he had heard little but cursing, was civilized English.

Pale to the lips, the son of the wilderness leaped over the snow-drift and strode toward the survivor. In the teachings of his father, murder was the greatest of all crimes; its punishment was swift death. This man who stood on the brink of the chasm which had swallowed his companion had been the aggressor in the fight. He had struck first. He had killed. In the heart of Polaris arose a terrible sense of outraged justice. This waif of the eternal snows became the law.

The stranger turned and saw him. He started violently, paled, and then an angry flush mounted to his temples and an angry glint came into his eyes. His crime had been witnessed, and by a strange white man.

His hand flew to his hip, and he swung a heavy revolver up and fired, speeding the bullet with a curse. He missed and would have fired again, but his hour had struck. With the precision of an automaton Polaris snatched one of his own pistols from the holster. He raised it above the level of his shoulder, and fired on the drop.

Not for nothing had he spent long hours practicing with his father's guns, sighting and pulling the trigger countless times, although they were empty. The man in front of him staggered, dropped his pistol, and reeled dizzily. A stream of blood gushed from his lips. He choked, clawed at the air, and pitched backward.

The chasm which had received his victim, received the murderer also.

Polaris heard a shrill scream to his right, and turned swiftly on his heel, automatically swinging up his revolver to meet a new peril.

Another being stood on the brow of the ridge—stood with clasped

hands and horror-stricken eyes. Clad almost the same as the others, there was yet a subtle difference which garments could not disguise.

Polaris leaned forward with his whole soul in his eyes. His hand fell to his side. He had made his second discovery. He had discovered woman!

### 3. POLARIS MAKES A PROMISE

BOTH STOOD transfixed for a long moment—the man with the wonder that followed his anger, the woman with horror. Polaris drew a deep breath and stepped a hesitating pace forward.

The woman threw out her hands in a gesture of loathing.

"Murderer!" she said in a low, deep voice, choked with grief. "Oh, my brother; my poor brother!" She threw herself on the snow, sobbing terribly.

Rooted to the spot by her repelling gesture, Polaris watched her. So one of the men had been her brother. Which one? His naturally clear mind began to reassert itself.

"Lady," he called softly. He did not attempt to go nearer to her.

She raised her face from her arms, crept to her knees, and stared at him stonily. "Well, murderer, finish your work," she said. "I am ready. Ah, what had he—what had they done that you should take their lives?"

"Listen to me, lady," said Polaris quietly. "You saw me—kill. Was that man your brother?"

The girl did not answer, but continued to gaze at him with horror-stricken eyes. Her mouth quivered pitifully.

"If that man was your brother, then I killed him, and with reason," pursued Polaris calmly. "If he was not, then of your brother's death, at least, I am guiltless. I did but punish his slayer."

"His *slayer*! What are you saying?" gasped the girl.

Polaris snapped open the breech of his revolver and emptied its cartridges into his hand. He took the other revolver from its holster and emptied it also. He laid the cartridge in his hand and extended it.

"See," he said, "there are twelve cartridges, but only one empty shell. Only two shots were fired—one by the man whom I killed, the other by me." He saw that he had her attention, and repeated his question: "Was that man your brother?"

"No," she answered.

"Then, you see, I could not have *shot* your brother," said Polaris. His face grew stern with the memory of the scene he had witnessed. "They quarreled, your brother and the other man. I came behind the drift yonder and saw them. I might have stopped them—but, lady, they were the first men I had ever seen, save only one. I was bound by surprise. The other

man was stronger. He struck your brother into the crevass. He would have shot me, but my mind returned to me, and with anger at that which I saw, and I killed him.

"In proof, lady, see—the snow between me and the spot yonder where they stood is untracked. I have been no nearer."

Wonderingly the girl followed with her eyes and the direction of his pointing finger. She comprehended.

"I—I believe you have told me the truth," she faltered. "They *had* quarreled. But—but—you said they were the first men you had ever seen. How—what—"

Polaris crossed the intervening slope and stood at her side.

"That is a long tale, lady," he said simply. "You are in distress. I would help you. Let us go to your camp. Come."

The girl raised her eyes to his, and they gazed long at one another. Polaris saw a slender figure of nearly his own height. She was clad in heavy woolen garments. A hooded cap framed the long oval of her face.

The eyes that looked into his were steady and gray. Long eyes they were, delicately turned at the corners. Her nose was straight and high, its end tilted ever so slightly. Full, crimson lips and a firm little chin peeped over the collar of her jacket. A wisp of chestnut hair swept her high brow and added its tale to a face that would have been accounted beautiful in any land.

In the eyes of Polaris she was divinity.

The girl saw a young giant in the flower of his manhood. Clad in splendid white furs of fox and bear, with a necklace of teeth of the polar bear for adornment, he resembled those magnificent barbarians of the Northland's ancient sagas.

His yellow hair had grown long, and fell about his shoulders under his fox-skin cap. The clean-cut lines of his face scarce were shaded by its growth of red-gold beard and mustache. Except for the guns at his belt he might have been a young chief of vikings. His countenance was at once eager, thoughtful, and determined.

Barbaric and strange as he seemed, the girl found in his face that which she might trust. She removed a mitten and extended a small, white hand to him. Falling on one knee in the snow, Polaris kissed it, with the grace of a knight of old doing homage to his lady fair.

The girl flashed him another wondering glance from her long, gray eyes that set all his senses tingling. Side by side they passed over the ridge.

Disaster had overtaken the camp which lay on the other side. Camp it was by courtesy only—a miserable shelter of blankets and robes, propped with pieces of broken sledge, a few utensils, the partially devoured carcass

of a small seal, and a tiny fire, kindled from fragments of the sledge. In the snow some distance from the fire lay the stiffened bodies of several sledge dogs, sinister evidence of the hopelessness of the campers' position.

Polaris turned questioningly to the girl.

"We were lost in the storm," she said. "We left the ship, meaning to be gone only a few hours, and then were lost in the blinding snow. That was three days ago. How many miles we wandered I do not know. The dogs became crazed and turned upon us. The men shot them. Oh, there seems so little hope in this terrible land!" She shuddered. "But you—where did you come from?"

"Do not lose heart, lady," replied Polaris. "Always, in every land, there is hope. There must be. I have lived here all my life. I have come up from the far south. I know but one path—the path to the north, to the world of men. Now I will fetch my sledge up, and then we shall talk and decide. We will find your ship. I, Polaris, promise you that."

He turned from her to the fire, and cast on its dying embers more fragments of the splintered sledge. His eyes shone. He muttered to himself: "A ship, a ship! Ah, but my father's God is good to his son!"

He set off across the snow slopes to bring up the pack.

#### 4. HURLED SOUTH AGAIN

WHEN HIS STRONG form had bounded from her view, the girl turned to the little hut and shut herself within. She cast herself on a heap of blankets, and gave way to her bereavement and terror.

Her brother's corpse was scarcely cold at the bottom of the abyss. She was lost in the trackless wastes—alone, save for this bizarre stranger who had come out of the snows, this man of strange saying, who seemed a demigod of the wilderness.

Could she trust him? She must. She recalled him kneeling in the snow, and the courtierlike grace with which he kissed her hand. A hot flush mounted to her eyes. She dried her tears.

She heard him return to the camp, and heard the barking of the dogs. Once he passed near the hut, but he did not intrude, and she remained within.

Womanlike, she set about the rearrangement of her hair and clothing. When she had finished she crept to the doorway and peeped out. Again her blushes burned her cheeks. She saw the son of the snows crouched above the camp-fire, surrounded by a group of monstrous dogs. He had rubbed his face with oil. A bright blade glittered in his hand. Polaris was *shaving!*

Presently she went out. The young man sprang to his feet, cracking his

long whip to restrain the dogs, which would have sprung upon the stranger. They huddled away, their teeth bared, staring at her with glowing eyes. Polaris seized one of them by the scruff of the neck, lifted it bodily from the snow, and swung it in front of the girl.

"Talk to him, lady," he said; "you must be friends. This is Julius."

The girl bent over and fearlessly stroked the brute's head.

"Julius, good dog," she said. At her touch the dog quivered and its hackles rose. Under the caress of her hand it quieted gradually. The bristling hair relaxed, and Julius's tail swung slowly to and fro in an overture of amity. When Polaris loosed him, he sniffed in friendly fashion at the girl's hands, and pushed his great head forward for more caresses.

Then Marcus, the grim leader of the pack, stalked majestically forward for his introduction.

"Ah, you have won Marcus!" cried Polaris. "And Marcus won is a friend indeed. None of them would harm you now." Soon she had learned the name and had the confidence of every dog of the pack, to the great delight of their master.

Among the effects in the camp was a small oil-stove, which Polaris greeted with brightened eyes. "One like that we had, but it was worn out long ago," he said. He lighted the stove and began the preparation of a meal.

She found that he had cleared the camp and put all in order. He had dragged the carcasses of the dead dogs to the other side of the slope and piled them there. His stock of meat was low, and his own dogs would have no qualms if it came to making their own meals of these strangers of their own kind.

The girl produced from the remnants of the camp stores a few handfuls of coffee and an urn. Polaris watched in wonderment as she brewed it over the tiny stove and his nose twitched in reception of its delicious aroma. They drank the steaming beverage, piping hot, from tin cups. In the stinging air of the snowlands even the keenest grief must give way to the pangs of hunger. The girl ate heartily of a meal that in a more moderate climate she would have considered fit only for beasts.

When their supper was completed they sat huddled in their furs at the edge of the fire. Around them were crouched the dogs, watching with eager eyes for any scraps which might fall to their share.

"Now tell me who you are, and how you came here," questioned the girl.

"Lady, my name is Polaris, and I think that I am an American gentleman," he said, and a trace of pride crept into the words of the answer. "I came here from a cabin and a ship that lie burned many leagues to the southward. All my life I have lived there, with but one

companion, my father, who now is dead, and who sends me to the north with a message to that world of men that lies beyond the snows, and from which he long was absent."

"A ship—a cabin—" The girl bent toward him in amazement. "And burned? And you have lived—have grown up in this land of snow and ice and bitter cold, where but few things can exist—I don't understand!"

"My father has told me much, but not all. It is all in his message which I have not seen," Polaris answered. "But that which I tell you is truth. He was a seeker after new things. He came here to seek that which no other man had found. He came in a ship with my mother and others. All were dead before I came to knowledge. He had built a cabin from the ruins of the ship, and he lived there until he died."

"And you say that you are an American gentleman?"

"That he told me, lady, although I do not know my name or his, except that he was Stephen, and he called me Polaris."

"And did he never try to get to the north?" asked the girl.

"No. Many years ago, when I was a boy, he fell and was hurt. After that he could do but little. He could not travel."

"And you?"

"I learned to seek food in the wilderness, lady; to battle with its beasts, to wrest that which would sustain our lives from the snows and the wastes."

Much more of his life and of his father he told her under her wondering questioning—a tale most incredible to her ears, but, as he said, the truth. Finally he finished.

"Now, lady, what of you?" he asked. "How came you here, and from where?"

"My name is Rose—"

"Ah, that is the name of a flower," said Polaris. "You were well named."

He did not look at her as he spoke. His eyes were turned to the snow slopes and were very wistful. "I have never seen a flower," he continued slowly, "but my father said that of all created things they were the fairest."

"I have another name," said the girl. "It is Rose—Rose Emer."

"And why did you come here, Rose Emer?" asked Polaris.

"Like your father, I—we were seekers after new things, my brother and I. Both our father and mother died, and left my brother John and myself ridiculously rich. We had to use our money, so we traveled. We have been over most of the world. Then a man—an American gentleman—a very brave man, organized an expedition to come to the south to discover the south pole. My brother and I knew him. We were very much interested in his adventure. We helped him with it. Then John



insisted that he would come with the expedition, and—oh, they didn't wish me to come, but I never had been left behind—I came, too."

"And that brave man who came to seek the pole, where is he now?"

"Perhaps he is dead—out there" said the girl, with a catch in her voice. She pointed to the south. "He left the ship and went on, days ago. He was to establish two camps with supplies. He carried an airship with him. He was to make his last dash for the pole through the air from the farther camp. His men were to wait for him until—until they were sure that he would not come back."

"An airship!" Polaris bent forward with sparkling eyes. "So there *are* airships, then! Ah, this man must be brave! How is he called?"

"James Scoland is the name—Captain Scoland."

"He went on whence I came? Did he go by that way?" Polaris pointed where the white tops of the mountain range which he skirted pierced the sky.

"No. He took a course to the east of the mountains, where other explorers of years before had been before him."

"Yes, I have seen maps. Can you tell me where, or nearly where, we are now?" he asked the girl.

"This is Victoria Land," she answered. "We left the ship in a long bay, extending in from Ross Sea, near where the 160th meridian joins the 80th parallel. We are somewhere within three days' journey from the ship."

"And so near to open water?"

She nodded.

Rose Emer slept in the little shelter, with the grim Marcus curled on a robe beside her pallet. Crouched among the dogs in the camp, Polaris slept little. For hours he sat huddled, with his chin on his hands, pondering what the girl had told him. Another man was on his way to the pole—a very brave man—and he might reach it. And then—Polaris must be very wary when he met that man who had won so great a prize.

"Ah, my father," he sighed, "learning is mine through patience. History of the world and of its wars and triumphs and failures, I know. Of its tongues you have taught me, even those of the Roman and the Greek, long since passed away; but how little do I know of the ways of men—and of women! I shall be very careful, my father."

Quite beyond any power of his to control, an antagonism was growing within him for that man whom he had not seen; antagonism that was not all due to the magnitude of the prize which the man might be winning, or might be dying for. Indeed, had he been able to analyze it, that was the least part of it.

When they broke camp for their start they found that the perverse wind, which had rested while they slept, had risen when they would journey, and hissed bitterly across the bleak steppes of snow. Polaris made a place on the sledge for the girl, and urged the pack into the teeth of the gale. All day long they battled ahead in it, bearing left to the west, where was more level pathway, than among the snow dunes.

In an ever increasing blast they came in sight of open water. They halted on a far-stretching field, much broken by huge masses, so snow-covered that it was not possible to know whether they were of rock or ice. Not a quarter of a mile beyond them, the edge of the field was fretted by wind-lashed waves, which extended away to the horizon rim, dotted with tossing icebergs of great height.

Polaris pitched camp in the shelter of a towering cliff, and they made themselves what comfort they could in the stinging cold.

They had slept several hours when the slumbers of Polaris were pierced by a woman's screams, the frenzied howling of the dogs, and the thundering reverberations of grinding and crashing ice cliffs. A dash of spray splashed across his face.

He sprang to his feet in the midst of the leaping pack; as he did so he felt the field beneath him sway and pitch like a hammock. For the first time since he started for the north the Antarctic sun was shining brightly—shining cold and clear on a great disaster!

For they had pitched their camp on an ice floe. Whipped on by the gale, the sea had risen under it, heaved it up and broken it. On a section of the floe several acres in extent their little camp lay, at the very brink of a gash in the ice-field which had cut them off from the land over which they had come.

The water was raging like a millrace through the widening rift between them and the shore. Caught in a swift current and urged by the furious wind, the broken-up floe was drifting, faster and faster—*back to the south!*

## 5. BATTLE ON THE FLOE

HELPLESS, POLARIS stood at the brink of the rift, swirling water and tossing ice throwing the spray about him in clouds. Here was opposition against which his naked strength was useless. As if they realized that they were being parted from the firm land, the dogs grouped at the edge of the floe and sent their dismal howls across the raging swirl, only to be drowned by the din of the crashing icebergs.

Turning, Polaris saw Rose Emer. She stood at the doorway of the tent of skins, staring across the wind-swept channel with a blank despair looking from her eyes.

"Ah, all is lost, now!" she gasped.

Then the great spirit of the man rose into spoken words. "No, lady," he called, his voice rising clearly above the shrieking and thundering pandemonium. "We yet have our lives."

As he spoke there was a rending sound at his feet. The dogs sprang back in terror and huddled against the face of the ice cliff. Torn away by the impact of some weightier body beneath, nearly half of the ledge where they stood was split from the main body of the floe, and plunged, heaving and crackling into the current.

Polaris saved himself by a mighty spring. Right in the path of the gash lay the sledge, and it hung balanced at the edge of the ice floe. Down it swung, and would have slipped over, but Polaris saw it going.

He clutched at the ends of the leathern dog-harness as they glided from him across the ice, and, with a tug, into which he put all the power of his splendid muscles, he retrieved the sledge. Hardly had he dragged it to safety when, with another roar of sundered ice, their foothold gaped again and left them but a scanty shelf at the foot of the beetling berg.

"Here we may not stay, lady," said Polaris. He swept the tent and its robes into his arms and piled them on the sledge. Without waiting to harness the dogs, he grasped the leather bands and alone pulled the load along the ledge and around a shoulder of the cliff.

At the other side of the cliff a ridge extended between the berg which they skirted and another towering mountain of ice of similar formation. Beyond the twin bergs lay the level plane of the floe, its edges continually frayed by the attack of the waves and the onset of floating ice.

Along the incline of the ridge were several hollows partially filled with drift snow. Knowing that on the ice cape, in such a tempest, they must soon perish miserably, Polaris made camp in one of these depressions where the deep snow tempered the chill of its foundation.

In the clutch of the churning waters the floe turned slowly like an immense wheel as it drifted in the current. Its course was away from the shore to the southwest, and it gathered speed and momentum with every passing second. The cove from whence it had been torn was already a mere notch in the faraway shore line.

Around them was a scene of wild and compelling beauty. Leagues and leagues of on-rushing water hurled its white-crested squadrons against the precipitous sides of the flotilla of icebergs, tore at the edges of the drifting floes, and threw itself in huge waves across the more level planes, inundating them repeatedly. Clouds of lacelike spray hung in the air after each attack, and cascading torrents returned to the waves.

Above it all the Antarctic sun shone gloriously, splintering its golden spears on the myriad pinnacles, minarets, battlements, and crags of

towering masses of crystal that reflected back into the quivering air all the colors of the spectrum. Thinner crests blazed flame-red in the rays. Other points glittered coldly blue. From a thousand lesser scintillating spires the shifting play of the colors, from vermilion to purple, from green to gold, in the lavish magnificence of nature's magic, was torture to the eye that beheld.

On the spine of the ridge stood Polaris, leaning on his long spear and gazing with heightened color and gleaming eyes on those fairy symbols of old mother nature. To the girl who watched him he seemed to complete the picture. In his superb trappings of furs, and surrounded by his shaggy servants, he was at one with his weird and terrible surroundings. She admired—and shuddered.

Presently, when he came down from the ridge, she asked him, with a brave smile, "What, sir, will be the next move?"

"That is in the hands of the great God, if such a one there be," he said. "Whatever it may be, it shall find us ready. Somewhere we must come to shore. When we do—on to the north and the ship, be it half a world away."

"But for food and warmth? We must have those, if we are to go in the flesh."

"Already they are provided for," he replied quickly. He was peering sharply over her shoulder toward the mass of the other berg. With his words the clustered pack set up an angry snarling and baying. She followed his glance and paled.

Lumbering forth from a narrow pass at the extremity of the ridge was a gigantic polar bear. His little eyes glittered wickedly, hungrily, and his long, red tongue crept out and licked his slavering chops. As he came on, with ungainly, padding gait, his head swung ponderously to and fro.

Scarcely had he cleared the pass of his immense bulk when another twitching white muzzle was protruded, and a second beast, in size nearly equal to the first, set foot on the ridge and ambled on to the attack.

Reckless at least of this peril, the dogs would have leaped forward to close with the invaders but their master intervened. The stinging, cracking lash in his hand drove them from the foe. Their overlord, man, elected to make the battle alone.

In two springs he reached the sledge, tore the rifle from its coverings, and was at the side of the girl. He thrust the weapon into her hands.

"Back, lady; back to the sledge!" he cried. "Unless I call, shoot not. If you do shoot, aim for the throat when they rear, and leave the rest to me and the dogs. Many times have I met these enemies, and I know well how to deal with them."

With another crack of the whip over the heads of the snarling pack, he left her and bounded forward, spear in hand and long knife bared.

Awkward of pace and unhurried, the snow kings came on to their feast. In a thought the man chose his ground. Between him and the bears the ridge narrowed so that for a few feet there was footway for but one of the monsters at once.

Polaris ran to where that narrow path began and threw himself on his face on the ice.

At that ruse the foremost bear hesitated. He reared and brushed his muzzle with his formidable crescent-clawed paw. Polaris might have shot then and ended at once the hardest part of his battle. But the man held to a stubborn pride in his own weapons. Both of the beasts he would slay, if he might, as he always had slain. His guns were reserved for dire extremity.

The bear settled to all fours again, and reached out a cautious paw and felt along the path, its claws gouging seams in the ice. Assured that the footing would hold, it crept out on the narrow way, nearer and nearer to the motionless man. Scarce a yard from him it squatted. The steam of its breath beat toward him.

It raised one armed paw to strike. The girl cried out in terror and raised the rifle. The man moved, and she hesitated.

Down came the terrible paw, its curved claws projected and compressed for the blow. It struck only the adamantine ice of the pathway, splintering it. With the down stroke timed to the second, the man had leaped up and forward.

As though set on a steel spring, he vaulted into the air, above the clashing talons and gnashing jaws, and landed light and sure on the back of his ponderous adversary. To pass an arm under the bear's throat, to clip its back with the grip of his legs was the work of a heart-beat's time for Polaris.

With a stifled howl of rage the bear rose to its haunches, and the man rose with it. He gave it no time to turn or settle. Exerting his muscles of steel, he tugged the huge head back. He swung clear from the body of his foe. His feet touched the path and held it. He shot one knee into the back of the bear.

The spear he had dropped when he sprang, but his long knife gleamed in his hand, and he stabbed, once, twice, sending the blade home under the brute's shoulder. He released his grip; spurned the yielding body with his foot, and the huge hulk rolled from the path down the slope, crimsoning the snow with its blood.

Polaris bounded across the narrow ledge and regained his spear. He

smiled as there arose from the foot of the slope a hideous clamor that told him that the pack had charged in, as usual, not to be restrained at sight of the kill. He waved his hand to the girl, who stood, statuelike, beside the sledge.

Doubly enraged at its inability to participate in the battle which had been the death of its mate, the smaller bear waited no longer when the path was clear, but rushed madly with lowered head. Strong as he was, the man knew that he could not hope to stay or turn that avalanche of flesh and sinew. As it reached him he sprang aside where the path broadened, lashing out with his keen-edged spear.

His aim was true. Just over one of the small eyes the point of the spear bit deep, and blood followed it. With tigerish agility the man leaped over the beast, striking down as he did so.

The bear reared on its hindquarters and whimpered, brushing at its eyes with its forepaws. Its head gashed so that the flowing blood blinded it, it was beaten. Before it stood its master. Bending back until his body arched like a drawn bow, Polaris poised his spear and thrust home at the broad chest.

A death howl that was echoed back from the crashing cliffs was answer to his stroke. The bear settled forward and sprawled in the snow.

Polaris set his foot on the body of the fallen monster and gazed down at the girl with smiling face.

"Here, lady, are food and warmth for many days," he called.

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# **PALOS OF THE DOG STAR PACK**

**by J. U. Giesy**

Sz: *Palos of the Dog Star Pack* and its two sequels, by J. U. Giesy (James Ullrich Giesy), are unquestionably among the most appreciated novels in the Edgar Rice Burroughs tradition to appear. What is distinctive about Giesy is the flavor of the occult that permeates so much of his work, despite the fact that he was a medical doctor and a man of science. Giesy's friend and literary collaborator, Junius B. Smith, a practicing attorney, had a fellowship in the American Academy of Astrologians and worked toward having astrology accepted as a true science.

J. U. Giesy was born "near" Chillicothe, Ohio, August 6, 1877. At the age of thirteen he moved with his family to Salt Lake City, where he was to spend most of his life. He graduated from the Starling Medical College, Columbus, Ohio, in 1898 and spent his internship in Salt Lake City. During World War I he was a captain in the medical corps, and after the war was a major in the medical reserve. He trained six hundred men a year during World War I as an officer at Plattsburg Training Camp, Salt Lake City, a camp which he organized in 1916.

Love came to him in 1904, and he was married December of that year in San Francisco to Juliet Galena Conwell and enjoyed a fine lifelong relationship with his wife. He was a member of the American College of Physical Therapy and an associate editor on the staff of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, as well as serving as one of the editors of ARCHIVES OF PHYSICAL THERAPY X-RAY AND RADIUM.

Though he began to write in 1910, his first sale was a collaboration done in 1911 with Junius B. Smith, then practicing in Salt Lake City. Smith claimed that his grandfather was a brother of the Joseph Smith who founded the Mormon church. The early Semi-Dual stories of the collaboration were mailed

from Dr. Giesy's offices at 714 Kearns Building, Salt Lake City, and the usual rate of payment was about two cents a word.

Giesy expressed a touch of impish humor in a series of short stories concerning Xenophon Xerxes Zapt, who invents devices for exploding dynamite at a distance, for antigravity, and for invisibility and manages to involve a delightfully corruptible Irish cop in each of them. *The Wicked Flea* (WEIRD TALES, October, 1925) was the last in this series, where Zapt greatly enlarges an objectionable insect.

As early as 1927 J. U. Giesy published a hardcover western, *The Valley of Suspicion*, from Garden City Publishing Company. In his later years he turned entirely to westerns under the pen name of Charles Dustin: *Hardboiled Tenderfoot*, *Bronco Men*, and *Riders of the Desert Trail*, all appearing from The Dodge Publishing Company in the early 1940's.

The line of demarcation between fantasy and science fiction and even between the supernatural and science fiction was not as sharply drawn before 1920 as it is today. J. U. Giesy, who wrote detective novels in which knowledge of the occult was used to solve crimes, did not hesitate to employ a similar device for space travel in *Palos of the Dog Star Pack*. The occult serves as a means of getting to another world, and the spiritualistic concept that the "soul" or intelligence lives free of the body plays an integral role, yet this novel and the two sequels that it inspired were clearly science fiction in their delineation of the action and romance on a planet around a star many light years from earth. The early chapters of *Palos of the Dog Star Pack* presented here, in consequence, offer the reader an utterly strange and unfamiliar literary mood.

## 1. OUT OF THE STORM

IT WAS A miserable night which brought me first in touch with Jason Croft. There was a rain and enough wind to send it in gusty dashes against the windows. It was the sort of a night when I always felt glad to cast off coat and shoes, don a robe and slippers, and sit down with the curtains drawn, a lighted pipe, and the soft glow of a lamp falling across the pages of my book. I am, I admit, always strangely susceptible to the shut-in sense of comfort afforded by a pipe, the steady yellow of a light, and the magic of printed lines at a time of elemental turmoil and stress.

It was with a feeling little short of positive annoyance that I heard the door-bell ring. Indeed, I confess, I was tempted to ignore it altogether at first. But as it rang again, and was followed by a rapid tattoo of rapping, as of fists pounded against the door itself, I rose, laid aside my book, and stepped into the hall.

First switching on a porch-light, I opened the outer door, to reveal the



figure of an old woman, somewhat stooping, her head covered by a shawl, which sloped wetly from her head to either shoulder, and was caught and held beneath her chin by one bony hand.

"Doctor," she began in a tone of almost frantic excitement. "Dr. Murray—come quick!"

Perhaps I may as well introduce myself here as anywhere else. I am Dr. George Murray, still, as at the time of which I write, in charge of the State Mental Hospital in a Western State. The institution was not then very large, and since taking my position at the head of its staff I had found myself with considerable time for my study along the lines of human psychology and the various powers and aberrations of the mind.

Also, I may as well confess, as a first step toward a better understanding of my part in what followed, that for years before coming to the asylum I had delved more or less deeply into such studies, seeking to learn what I might concerning both the normal and the abnormal manifestations of mental force.

There is good reading and highly entertaining, I assure you, in the various philosophies dealing with life, religion, and the several beliefs regarding the soul of man. I was therefore fairly conversant not only with the Occidental creeds, but with those of the Oriental races as well. And I knew that certain of the Eastern sects had advanced in their knowledge far beyond our Western world. I had even endeavored to make their knowledge mine, so far as I could, in certain lines at least, and had from time to time applied some of that knowledge to the treatment of cases in the institution of which I was the head.

But I was not thinking of anything like that as I looked at the shawl-wrapped face of the little bent woman, wrinkled and wry enough to have been a very part of the storm which beat about her and blew back the skirts of my lounging-robe and chilled my ankles. I lived in a residence detached from the asylum buildings proper, but none the less a part of the institution; and, as a matter of fact, my sole thought was a feeling of surprise that any one should have come here to find me, and despite the woman's manifest state of anxiety and haste, a decided reluctance to go with her quickly or otherwise on such a night.

I rather temporized: "But, my dear woman, surely there are other doctors for you to call. I am really not in general practice. I am connected with the asylum—" "And that is the very reason I always said I would come for you if anything happened to Mr. Jason," she cut in.

"Whom?" I inquired, interested in spite of myself at this plainly premeditated demand for my service.

"Mr. Jason Croft, sir," she returned. "He's dead maybe—I dunno. But he's been that way for a week."

"Dead?" I exclaimed in almost an involuntary fashion, startled by her words.

"Dead, or asleep. I don't know which."

Clearly there was something here I wasn't getting into fully, and my interest aroused. The whole affair seemed to be taking on an atmosphere of the peculiar, and it was equally clear that the gusty doorway was no place to talk. "Come in," I said. "What is your name?"

"Goss," said she, without making any move to enter. "I'm house-keeper for Mr. Jason, but I'll not be comin' in unless you say you'll go."

"Then come in without any more delay," I replied, making up my mind. I knew Croft in a way—by sight at least. He was a big fellow with light hair and a splendid physique, who had been pointed out to me shortly after my arrival. Once I had even got close enough to the man to look into his eyes. They were gray, and held a peculiar something in their gaze which had arrested my attention at once. Jason Croft had the eyes of a mystic—of a student of those very things I myself had studied more or less.

They were the eyes of one who saw deeper than the mere objective surface of life, and the old woman's words at the last had waked up my interest in no uncertain degree. I had decided I would go with her to Croft's house, which was not very far down the street, and see, if I might, for myself just what had occurred to send her rushing to me through the night.

I gave her a seat, said I would get on my shoes and coat, and went back into the room I had left some moments before. There I dressed quickly for my venture into the storm, adding a raincoat to my other attire, and was back in the hall inside five minutes at most.

We set out at once, emerging into the wind-driven rain, my long raincoat flapping about my legs and the little old woman tottering along at my side. And what with the rain, the wind, and the unexpected summons, I found myself in a rather strange frame of mind. The whole thing seemed more like some story I had read than a happening of real life, particularly so as my companion kept pace with me and uttered no sound save at times a rather rasping sort of breath. The whole thing became an almost eery experience as we hastened down the storm-swept street.

Then we turned in at a gate and went up toward the large house I knew to be Croft's, and the little old woman unlocked a heavy front door and led me into a hall. It was a most unusual hall, too, its walls draped with rare tapestries and rugs, its floor covered with other rugs such as I had never seen outside private collections, lighted by a hammered brass lantern through the pierced sides of which the rays of an electric light shone forth.

Across the hall she scuttered, still in evident haste, and flung open a door to permit me to enter a room which was plainly a study. It was lined with cases of books, furnished richly yet plainly with chairs, a heavy desk, and a broad couch, on which I saw in one swift glance the stretched-out body of Croft himself.

He lay wholly relaxed, like one sunk in heavy sleep, his eyelids closed, his arms and hands dropped limply at his sides, but no visible sign of respiration animating his deep full chest.

Toward him the little woman gestured with a hand, and stood watching, still with her wet shawl about her head and shoulders, while I approached and bent over the man.

I touched his face and found it cold. My fingers sought his pulse and failed to find it at all. But his body was limp as I lifted an arm and dropped it. There was no rigor, yet there was no evidence of decay, such as must follow once rigor has passed away. I had brought instruments with me as a matter of course. I took them from my pocket and listened for some sound from the heart. I thought I found the barest flutter, but I wasn't sure. I tested the tension of the eyeball under the closed lids and found it firm. I straightened and turned to face the little old woman.

"Dead, sir?" she asked in a sibilant whisper. Her eyes were wide in their sockets. They stared into mine.

I shook my head. "He doesn't appear to be dead," I replied. "See here, Mrs. Goss, what did you mean by saying he ought to have been back three days ago? What do you mean by back?"

She fingered at her lips with one bony hand. "Why—awake, sir," she said at last.

"Then why didn't you say so?" I snapped. "Why use the word back?"

"Because, sir," she faltered, "that's what he says when he wakes up. 'Well, Mary, I'm back.' I—I guess I just said it because he does, doctor. I—was worrit when he didn't come back—when he didn't wake up, to-night, an' it took to rainin'. I reckon maybe it was th' storm scared me, sir."

Her words had, however, given me a clue. "He's been like this before, then?"

"Yes, sir. But never more than four days without telling me he would. Th' first time was months ago—but it's been gettin' oftener and oftener, till now all his sleeps are like this. He told me not to be scared—an' to—to never bother about him—to—to just let him alone; but—I guess I was scared tonight, when it begun to storm an' him layin' there like that. It was like havin' a corpse in the house."

I began to gain a fuller appreciation of the situation. I myself had seen people in a cataleptic condition, had even induced the state in

subjects myself, and it appeared to me that Jason Croft was in a similar state, no matter how induced.

"What does your employer do?" I asked.

"He studies, sir—just studies things like that." Mrs. Goss gestured at the cases of books. "He don't have to work, you know. His uncle left him rich."

I followed her arm as she swept it about the glass-fronted cases. I brought my glances back to the desk in the center of the room, between the woman and myself as we stood. Upon it I spied another volume lying open. It was unlike any book I had ever seen, yellowed with age; in fact not a book at all, but a series of parchment pages tied together with bits of silken cord.

I took the thing up and found the open pages covered with marginal notes in English, although the original was plainly in Sanskrit, an ancient language I had seen before, but was wholly unable to read. The notations, however, threw some light into my mind, and as I read them I forgot the storm, the little old woman—everything save what I read and the bearing it held on the man behind me on the couch. I felt sure they had been written by his own hand, and they bore on the subject of astral projection—the ability of the soul to separate itself, or be separated, from the physical body and return to its fleshy husk again at will.

I finished the open pages and turned to others. The notations were still present wherever I looked. At last I turned to the very front and found that the manuscript was by Ahmid, an occult adept of Hindustan, who lived somewhere in the second or third century of the Christian era.

With a strange sensation I laid down the silk-bound pages. They were very, very old. Over a thousand years had come and passed since they were written by the dead Ahmid's hand. Yet I had held them to-night, and I felt sure Jason Croft had held them often—read them and understood them, and that the condition in which I found him this night was in some way subtly connected with their store of ancient lore. And suddenly I sensed the storm and the little old woman and the silent body of the man at my back again, with a feeling of something uncanny in the whole affair.

"You can do nothing for him?" the woman broke my introspection.

I looked up and into her eyes, dark and bright and questioning as she stood still clutching her damp shawl.

"I'm not so sure of that," I said. "But—Mr. Croft's condition is rather—peculiar. Whatever I do will require quiet—that I am alone with him for some time. I think if I can be left here with him for possibly an hour, I can bring him back."

I paused abruptly. I had used the woman's former words almost. And

I saw she noticed the fact, for a slight smile gathered on her faded lips. She nodded. "You'll bring him back," she said. "Mind you, doctor, th' trouble is with Mr. Jason's head, I've been thinking. 'Twas for that I've been telling myself I would come for you, if he forgot to come back some time, like I've been afraid he would."

"You did quite right," I agreed. "But—the trouble is not with Mr. Croft's mind. In fact, Mrs. Goss, I believe he is a very learned man. How long have you known him, may I ask?"

"Ever since he was a boy, except when he was travelin'," she returned.

"He has traveled?" I took her up.

"Yes, sir, a lot. Me an' my husband kept up th' place while he was gone."

"I see," I said. "And now if you will let me try what I can do."

"Yes, sir. I'll set out in th' hall," she agreed, and turned in her rapid putter from the room.

Left alone, I took a chair, dragged it to the side of the couch, and studied my man.

So far as I could judge, he was at least six feet tall, and correspondingly built. His hair was heavy, almost tawny, and, as I knew, his eyes were gray. The whole contour of his head and features showed what appeared to me remarkable intelligence and strength, the nose finely chiseled, the mouth well formed and firm, the chin unmistakably strong. That Croft was an unusual character I felt more and more as I sat there. His very condition, which, from what I had learned from the little old woman and his own notation on the margins of Ahmid's writings, I believed self-induced, would certainly indicate that.

But my own years of study had taught me no little of hypnosis, suggestion, and the various phases of the subconscious mind. I had developed no little power with various patients, or "subjects," as a hypnotist calls them, who from time to time had submitted themselves to my control. Wherefore I felt that I knew about what to do to waken the sleeping objective mind of the man on the couch. I had asked for an hour, and the time had been granted. It behooved me to get to work.

I began. I concentrated my mind to the exclusion of all else upon my task. sending a mental call to the soul of Jason Croft, wherever it might be. commanding it to return to the body it had temporarily quitted of its own volition, and once more animate it to a conscious life. I forgot the strangeness of the situation, the rattle of the rain against the glass panes of the room. And after a time I began speaking to the form beside which I sat. as to a conscious person, firmly repeating over and over my demand for the presence of Jason Croft—demanding it, nor letting myself doubt for a single instant that the demand would be given heed in time.

It was a nerve-racking task. In the end it came to seem that I sat

there and struggled against some intangible, invisible force which resisted all my efforts. I look back now on the time spent there that night as an ordeal such as I never desire to again attempt. But I did not desist. I had asked for an hour, because when I asked I never dreamed the thing I had attempted, the thing which is yet to be related, concerning the weird, yet true narrative, as I fully believe, of Jason Croft.

I had then no conception of how far his venturesome spirit had plumbed the universe. If I thought of him at all, it was merely as some experimenter who might have need of help, rather than as an adept of adepts, who had transcended all human accomplishments in his line of research and thought.

In my own blindness I had fancied that his overlong period in his cataleptic trance might even be due to some inability on his part to reanimate his own body, after leaving it where it lay. I thought of myself as possibly aiding him in the task by what I would do in the time for which I had asked.

But the hour ran away, and another, and still the body over which I worked lay as it had lain at first, nor gave any sign of any effect of my concentrated will. It had been close to ten when I came to the house. It was three in the morning when I gained my first reward.

And when it came, it was so sudden that I actually started back in my chair and sat clutching its carved arms, and staring in something almost like horror, I think, at first at the body which had lifted itself to a sitting posture on the couch.

And I know that when the man said, "So you are the one who called me back?" I actually gasped before I answered:

"Yes."

Croft fastened his eyes upon me in a steady regard. "You are Dr. Murray, from the Mental Hospital, are you not?" he went on.

"Ye-es," I stammered again. Mrs. Goss had said his sleep was like having a corpse about the house. I found myself thinking this was nearly a though a corpse should rise up and speak.

But he nodded, with the barest smile on his lips. "Only one acquainted with the nature of my condition could have roused me," he said. "However, you were engaging in a dangerous undertaking, friend."

"Dangerous for you, you mean," I rejoined. "Do you know you have lain cataleptic for something like a week?"

"Yes." He nodded again. "But I was occupied on a most important mission."

"Occupied!" I exclaimed. "You mean you were engaged in some undertaking while you lay there?" I pointed to the couch where he sat.

"Yes." Once more he smiled.

Well, the man was sane. In fact, it seemed to me in those first few moments that he was far saner than I, far less excited, far less affected by the whole business from the first to last. In fact, he seemed quite calm and a trifle amused, while I was admittedly upset. And my very knowledge gained by years of study told me he was sane, that his was a perfectly balanced brain. There was nothing about him to even hint at anything else, save his extraordinary words. In the end I continued with a question:

"Where?"

"On the planet Palos, one of the Dog Star pack—a star in the system of the sun Sirius," he replied.

"And you mean you have just returned from—there?" I faltered over the last word badly. My brain seemed slightly dazed at the astounding statement he had made—that I—I had called him from a planet beyond the ken of the naked eye, known only to those who studied the heavens with powerful glasses—farther away than any star of our own earthly system of planets. The thing made my senses reel.

And he seemed to sense my emotions, because he went on in a softly modulated tone: "Do not think me in any way similar to those unfortunates under your charge. As an alienist you must know the truth of that, just as you knew that my trancelike sleep was wholly self-induced."

"I gathered that from the volume on your desk," I explained.

He glanced toward Ahmid's work. "You read the Sanskrit?" he inquired. I shook my head. "No, I read the marginal notes."

"I see. Who called you here?"

I explained.

Croft frowned. "I cannot blame her; she is a faithful soul," he remarked. "I can comprehend her worry. I have explained to her as fully as I dared, but—she does not understand, and I remained away longer than I really intended, to tell the truth. However, now that you can reassure her, I must ask you to excuse me, doctor, for a while. Come to me in about twelve hours and I will be here to meet you and explain in part at least." He stretched himself out once more on the couch.

"Wait!" I cried. "What are you going to do?"

"I am going back to Palos," he told me with a smile.

"But—will your body stand the strain?" I questioned, beginning to doubt his sanity after all.

He met my objection with another smile. "I have studied that well before I began these little excursions of mine. Meet me at, say, four o'clock this afternoon." He appeared to relax, sighed softly, and sank again into his trance.

I sprang up and stood looking down upon him. I hardly knew what to do. I began pacing the floor. Finally I gave my attention to the books in the cases which lined the room. They comprised the most wonderful collection of works on the occult ever gathered within four walls. They helped me to make up my mind in the end. I decided to take Jason Croft at his word and keep the engagement for the coming afternoon.

I went to the study door and set it open. The little old woman sat huddled on a chair. At first I thought she slept, but almost at once I found her bright eyes upon me, and she started to her feet.

"He came back—I—I heard him speaking," she began in a husky whisper. "He—is he all right?"

"All right," I replied. "But he is asleep again now and has promised to see me this afternoon at four. In the meantime do not attempt to disturb him in any way, Mrs. Goss."

She nodded. Suddenly she seemed wholly satisfied. "I won't, sir," she gave her promise. "I was worrit—worrit—that was all."

"You need not worry any more," I sought to reassure her. "I fancy Mr. Croft is able to take care of himself."

And, oddly enough, I found myself believing my own words as I went down the steps and turned toward my own home to get what sleep I could—since, to tell the truth, I felt utterly exhausted after my efforts to call Jason Croft back from—the planet of a distant sun.

## 2. A COUNTRY IN THE CLOUDS

AND YET when I woke in the morning and went about my duties at the asylum, I confess the events of the night before seemed rather unreal. I began to half fancy myself the victim of some sort of hoax. I did not doubt that Croft had been up to some psychic experiment when his old servant, Mrs. Goss, had become alarmed and brought me into the situation. But—I felt inclined to believe that after I had waked him from his self-induced trance he had deliberately turned the conversation into a channel which would give me a mental jolt before he had calmly gone back to sleep.

I knew something of the occult, of course, but I was hardly ready to credit the rather lurid statement he had made. Before noon I was smiling at myself, and determining to keep my appointment with him for the afternoon, and show him from the start that I was not so complete a fool as I had seemed.

Hence it was with a resolve not to be swept off my feet by any unusual fabrication of his devising that I approached his house at about three o'clock and turned in from the street to his porch.

He sat there, in a wicker chair, smoking an excellent cigar. No doubt



but he had recovered completely from the state in which I had beheld him first. He rose as I mounted the steps and put out a hand. "Ah, Dr. Murray," he greeted me with a smile. "I have been waiting your coming. Let me offer you a chair and a smoke while we talk."

We shook hands, and then I sat down and lighted the mate of the cigar Croft held between his strong, even teeth. Then, as I threw away the match, I looked straight into his eyes. And, believe me or not, it was as though the man read my thoughts.

He shook his head. "I really told you the truth, Murray, you know," he said.

"About—Palos?" I smiled.

He nodded. "Yes, I was really there, and—I went back after we had our talk."

"Rather quick work," I remarked, and puffed out some smoke. "Have you figured out how long it takes even light to reach the earth from that distant star, Mr. Croft?"

"Light?" He half-knit his brows, then suddenly laughed without sound. "Oh, I see—you refer to the equation of time?"

"Well, yes. The distance is considerable, as you must admit."

He shook his head. "How long does it take you to think of Palos—of Sirius?" he asked.

"Not long," I replied.

He leaned back in his seat. "Murray," he went on, staring straight before him, "time is but the measure of consciousness. Outside the atmospheric envelopes of the planets—outside the limit of, well—say—human thought—time ceases to exist. And—if between the planets there is no time beyond the depths of their surrounding atmosphere—how long will it take to go from here to there?"

I stared. His statement was startling, at least.

"You mean that time is a mental conception?" I managed at last.

"Time is a mental measure of a span of eternity," he said slowly. "Past planetary atmospheres, eternity alone exists. In eternity there is no time. Hence, I cannot use what *is not*, either in going to or returning from that planet I have named. You admit you can think instantly of Palos. I allege that I can *think* myself, carry my astral consciousness instantly to Palos. Do you see?"

I saw what he meant, of course, and I indicated as much by a nod. "But," I objected, "you told me you had to return to Palos. Now you tell me you had projected your astral body to that star. What could you do there in the astral state?"

He smiled. "Very little. I know. I have passed through that stage. As a matter of fact, I have a body there now."

"You have what—" As I remember, I came half out of my chair, and

then sank back. The thing hit me as nothing else in my whole life had done before. His calm avowal was unbelievable on its face—impossible—a man with a double corporeal existence on two separate planets at one and the same time.

"A body—a living, breathing body," he repeated his declaration. "Oh, man, I know it overthrows all human conceptions of life, but—last night you asked me a question concerning *this* body of mine—and I told you I knew what I was doing. And I know you must have studied some of the teachings of the higher cult—the esoteric philosophies, if you will. And therefore you must have read of the ability of a spirit to dispossess a body of its original spiritual tenant and occupy its place—"

"Obsession," I interrupted. "You are practicing that—up there?"

"No. I've gone farther than that. I took this body when its original occupant was done with it," he said. "Murray—wait—let me explain. I'm a physician like yourself."

"You?" I exclaimed, none too politely, I fear, in the face of this additional surprise.

Croft's lips twitched. He seemed to understand and yet be slightly amused. "Yes. That's why I was able to assure you I knew how long the body I occupy now could endure a cataleptic condition last night. I am a graduate of Rush, and I fancy, fully qualified to speak concerning the body's needs. And—" he paused a moment, then resumed:

"Frankly, Murray, I find myself confronted by what I think I may call the strangest position a man was ever called upon to face. Last night I recognized in you one who had probably far from a minor understanding of mental and spiritual forces. Your ability to force my return at a time when I was otherwise engaged showed me your understanding. For that very reason I asked you to return to me here to-day. I would like to talk to you—a brother physician; to tell you a story—my story, provided you would care to hear it. Most men would call me insane. Something tells me you, who devote your time to the care of the insane, will not."

He paused and sat once more staring across the sunlit landscape which, after the storm of the night before, was glowing and fresh. After a time he turned his eyes and looked into mine with something almost an appeal, in his glance. In response, I nodded and settled myself in my chair.

"I'm not going to deny a natural curiosity, Dr. Croft," I said, since, to tell the absolute truth, I was anxious to get at the inward facts underlying the entire peculiar affair.

"Then," he said in an almost eager fashion, "I shall tell you—the whole thing, I think. Murray, when Shakespeare wrote into one of his characters' mouth the statement that there are more things in heaven and

earth than are dreamt of, he told the truth. Mankind in the main is like a crowd storming the doors of a showhouse sold out to capacity and unable to accommodate any one else. Mankind is the crowd in the lobby, shut out from the real sights back of the veiling doors which bar their perception of what goes on within. Mankind stands only on the fringe of life, does not dream of the truth. Only here and there is there one who *knows*. It was one such who first directed my mind toward the truth.

"Murray"—he paused and once more fastened me with his gaze—"I am going to tell that truth to you. . . . But first—in order that you may understand, and believe if you can, I shall tell you something of myself."

That telling took a long time; hours, the rest of the afternoon, and most of the following night. It was a strange tale, an unbelievably strange story. And yet, in view of what happened inside that same week, I am not sure, after all, but it was the truth, just as Croft alleged. What, when all is said, do any of us know beyond the round of our own human life? What do we know of those things which may lie outside the scope of our mental vision? There must be things in heaven and earth not dreamt of in the philosophy of *Horatio*. Here is the tale.

Jason Croft was born in New Jersey, but brought West at an early age by his parents, who had become converts to a certain faith. Right there, it seems to me, may have been laid the foundation of Croft's interest in the occult in later life, since that faith contains possibly a greater number of parallels to occult teachings than any of the Occidental creeds. Of course, in all religions there is the germ of truth. Were it not, they would be dead dogmas rather than living sects. But in this church, which has grown strong in the Western States, I think there is a closer approach to the Eastern theory of soul and spiritual life.

Be that as it may, Croft grew to manhood in the very state and town where I was now employed, and in the home on the porch of which we sat. He elected medicine as a career. He went to Chicago and put in his first three years. The second year his mother died, and a year later his father. He returned on each occasion, and went back to his studies after the obsequies were done. In his fourth year he met a man named Gatua Kahaun, destined, as it seems, to change the entire course of his life.

Gatua Kahaun was a Hindu, a member of an Eastern brotherhood, come to the United States to study the religions of the West. One can see how naturally he took up with Croft, who had been raised in one of those religions.

The two became friends. From what Croft told me, the Hindu was a man of marked attainments, well versed in the Oriental creeds. When Croft came West after his graduation, Gatua Kahaun was his companion

and stopped at his home, which had been kept up by Mrs. Goss and her husband, then still alive. The two lived there together for some weeks, and the Hindu taught Croft the rudiments at least of the occult philosophy of life.

Then, with little warning, Croft was assigned on a mission to Australia by his church. He got a letter from "Box B," as he told me, smiling, knowing I would understand. The church of which he was a member has a custom of sending their members about the world as missionaries of their faith, to spread its doctrines and win converts to their ranks. Croft went, though even then he had begun to see the similarity between his own lifelong creed and the scheme of things held before him by Gatua Kahaun.

For over two years he did not see the Hindu, though he kept up his studies of the occult, to which he seemed inclined by a natural bent. Then, just as he was nearly finished with his "mission," what should happen but that, walking the streets of Melbourne, he bumped into Gatua Kahaun.

The two men renewed their acquaintance at once. Gatua Kahaun taught Croft Hindustani and the mysteries of the Sanskrit tongue. When Croft's mission was finished he prevailed upon him to visit India before returning home.

Croft went. Through Gatua's influence he was admitted to the man's own brotherhood. He forgot his former objects and aims in life in the new world of thought which opened up before his mental eyes. He studied and thought. He learned the secrets of the magnetic or enveloping body of the soul, and after a time he became convinced that by constant application to the major purpose the spirit could break the bonds of the material body without going through the change which men call death. He came to believe that beyond the phenomenon of astral projection—the sending of the conscious ego about the earthly sphere—projections might be made beyond the planet, with only the universe to limit the scope of the flight.

At times he lay staring at the starry vault of the heavens with a vague longing within him to put the thing to the test. And always there was one star which seemed to call him, to beckon to him, to draw his spirit toward it as a magnet may draw a fleck of iron. That was the Dog Star, Sirius, known to astronomers as the sun of another planetary system like our own.

Meantime his studies went on. He learned that matter is the reflex of spirit; that no blade of grass, no chemical atom exists save as the envelope of an essence which cannot and does not die. He came to see that nature is no more than a realm of force, comprising light, heat, magnetism, chemical affinity, aura, essence, and all the imponderables

which go to produce the various forms of motion as expressions of the ocean of force, so that motion comes to be no more than force refracted through the various forms of existence, from the lowest to the highest, as a ray of light is split into the seven primary colors by a prism, each being different in itself, yet each but an integral part of the original ray.

He came to comprehend that all stages of existence are but stages and nothing more, and that mind, spirit, is the highest form of life force—the true essence—manifesting through material means, yet independent of them in itself. So only, he argued, was life after death a possible thing. And so, he reasoned further, could the mystery be solved, there was no real reason why the spirit could not be set free to roam and return to the body at will. If that were true, it seemed to him that the spirit could return from such excursions, bringing with it a conscious recollection of the place where it had been.

Then once more he was called home by a thing which seems like no more than a further step in the course of what mortals call fate. His father's brother died. He was a bachelor. He left Croft sufficient wealth to provide for his every need. Croft decided to pursue his studies at home. He had gained all India could give him. Indeed, he had rather startled even Gatua Kahaun by some of the theories he had deduced.

He began work at once. He stocked the library where I had found him the night before, with everything on the subject he could find. And the more he studied, the more firmly did he become convinced that ordinary astral projection was but the first step in developing the spirit's power—that it was akin to the first step of an infant learning to walk, and that, if confidence were forthcoming, if the will to dare the experiment were sufficiently strong—then he could accomplish the thing of which he dreamed.

He began to experiment, sending his astral consciousness here and there. He centered on that one phase of his knowledge alone. He roamed the earth at will. He perfected his ability to bring back from such excursions a vivid recollection of all he had seen. So at last he was ready for the great experiment. Yet in the end he made it on impulse rather than at any pre-selected time.

He sat one evening on his porch. Over the eastern mountains which hem in the valley the full moon was rising in a blaze of mellow glory. Its rays caught the sleeping surface of a lake which lies near our little city, touching each rippling wavelet until they seemed made of molten silver. The lights of the town itself were like fireflies twinkling amid the trees. The mountains hazed somewhat in a silvery mist, compounded of the moonrays and distance, seemed to him no more than the figments of a fairy tale or a dream.

Everything was quiet. Mrs. Goss, now a widow, had gone to bed, and Croft had simply been enjoying the soft air and a cigar. Suddenly, as the moon appeared to leap free of the mountains, it suggested a thought of a spirit set free and rising above the material shell of existence to his mind.

He sat watching the golden wheel radiant with reflected light, and after a time he asked himself why he should not try the great adventure without a longer delay. He was the last of his race. No one depended upon him. Should he fail, they would merely find his body in the chair. Should he succeed, he would have won his ambition and placed himself in a position to learn of things which had heretofore baffled man.

He decided to try it there and then. Knocking the ash from his cigar, he took one last, long, possibly farewell whiff, and laid it down on the broad arm of his chair. Then summoning all the potent power of his will, he fixed his whole mind upon his purpose and sank into cataleptic sleep.

The moon is dead. In so much science is right. It is lifeless, without moisture, without an atmosphere. Croft won his great experiment, or its first step at least. His body sank to sleep, but his ego leaped into a fuller, wider life.

There was a sensation of airy lightness, as though his sublimated consciousness had dropped material weight. His body sat beneath him in the chair. He could see it. He could see the city and the lake and the mountains and the yellow disk of the moon. He knew he was rising toward the latter swiftly. Then—space was annihilated in an instant, and he seemed to himself to be standing on the topmost edge of a mighty crater in the full, unobstructed glare of a blinding light.

He sensed that was the sun, which hung like a ball of fire halfway up from the horizon, flinging its rays in a dazzling brilliance against the dead satellite's surface, unprotected by an atmospheric screen. His first sensation was an amazing realization of his own success. Then he gazed about.

To one side was the vast ring of the crater itself, a well of unutterable darkness and unplumbed depth, as yet not opened up to the burning light of the sun. To the other was the downward sweep of the crater's flank, dun, dead, wrinkled, seamed and seared by the stabbing rays which bathed it in pitiless light. And beyond the foot of the crater was a vast irregular plain, lower in the center as though eons past it might have been the bed of some vanished sea. About the plain were the crests of barren mountains, crags, pinnacles, misshapen and weird beyond thought.

Yes, the moon is dead—now. But—there was life upon it once. Croft willed himself down from the lip of the crater to the plain. He moved

about it. Indeed it had been a sea. There in the airless blaze, still etched in the lifeless formations, he found an ancient water-line, the mark of the fingers of vanished waters—like a mockery of what had been. And skirting the outline of that long-lost sea, he came to the ruin of a city which had stood upon the shores a myriad years ago. It stood there still—a thing of paved streets, and dead walls, safe in that moistureless world from decay.

Through those dead streets and houses, some of them thrown down by terrific earthquakes which he judged had accompanied the final cooling stages and death of the moon, Croft took his way, pausing now and then to examine some ancient inscriptions cut into the blocks of stone from which the buildings had been reared. In a way they impressed him as similar in many respects to the Asiatic structures of to-day, most of them being windowless on the first story, but built about an inner court, gardens of beauty in the time when the moon supported life.

So far as he could judge from the buildings themselves and frescoes on the walls, done in pigments which still prevailed, the lunarians had been a tiny people, probably not above an average of four feet in height, but extremely intelligent past any doubt, as shown by the remains of their homes. They had possessed rather large heads in proportion to their slender bodies, as the paintings done on the inside walls led Croft to believe.

From the same source he became convinced that their social life had been highly developed, and that they had been well versed in the arts of manufacture and commerce, and had at the time when lunar seas persisted maintained a merchant marine.

Through the hours of the lunar day he explored. Not, in fact, until the sun was dropping swiftly below the rim of the mountains beyond the old sea-bed, did he desist. Then lifting his eyes he beheld a luminous crescent, many times larger than the moon appears to us, emitting a soft, green light. He stood and gazed upon it for some moments before he realized fully that he looked upon a sunrise on the earth—that the monster crescent was the earth indeed as seen from her satellite.

Then as realization came upon him he remembered his body—left on the porch of his home in the chair. Suddenly he felt a longing to return, to forsake the forsaken relics of a life which had passed and go back to the full, pulsing tide of life which still flowed on.

Here, then, he was faced by the second step of his experiment. He had consciously reached the moon. Could he return again to the earth? If so, he had proved his theory beyond any further doubt. Fastening his full power upon the endeavor, he willed himself back, and—

He opened his eyes—his physical eyes—and gazed into the early sun of

a new day rising over the mountains and turning the world to emerald and gold.

The sound of a caught-in breath fell on his ears. He turned his glance. Mrs. Goss stood beside him.

"Laws, sir, but you was sound asleep!" she exclaimed. "I come to call you to breakfast an' you wasn't in your room, an' when I found you you was sleepin' like th' dead. You must have got up awful early, Mr. Jason."

"I was here before you were moving," Croft said as he rose. He smiled as he spoke. Indeed, he wanted to laugh, to shout. He had done what no mortal had ever accomplished before. The wonders of the universe were his to explore at will. Yet even so he did not dream of what the future held.

### 3. BEYOND THE MOON

AND NOW the Dog Star called. Croft had proved his ability to project his conscious self beyond earth's attraction and return. And, having proved that, the old lure of the star he had watched when a student in the Indian mountains came back with a double strength. No longer was it an occasional prompting. Rather it was a never-ceasing urge which nagged him night and day.

He yielded at last. But remembering his return from his first experiment, he arranged for the next with due care. In order that Mrs. Goss might not become alarmed by seeing his body entranced, he arranged for her to take a holiday with a married daughter in another part of the state, telling her simply that he himself expected to be absent from his home for an indefinite time and would summon her upon his return.

He knew the woman well enough to be sure she would spread the word of his coming absence, and so felt assured that his body would remain undisturbed during the period of his venture into universal space.

Having seen the old woman depart, he entered the library, drew down all the blinds, and stretched himself on the couch. Fixing his mind on Sirius to the exclusion of everything else, he threw off the bonds of the flesh.

Yet here, as it chanced, even Croft made a well-nigh fatal mistake. It was toward Sirius he had willed himself in his thoughts, and Sirius is a sun. As a result, he realized none too soon that he was floating in the actual nebula surrounding the flaming orb itself.

Directly beneath him, as it appeared, the Dog Star rolled, a mass of electric fire. Mountains of flame ran darting off into space in all directions.



Between them the whole surface of the sun boiled and bubbled and seethed like a world-wide caldron. Not for a moment was there any rest upon that surface toward which he was sinking with incredible speed. Every atom of the monster sun was in motion, ever shifting, ever changing yet always the same. It quivered and billowed and shook. Flames of every conceivable color radiated from it in waves of awful heat. Vast explosions recurred again and again on the ever heaving surface. What seemed unthinkable hurricanes rushed into the voids created by the exploding gases.

In this maelstrom of titanic forces Croft found himself caught. Not even the wonderful force his spirit had attained could overcome the sun's power of repulsion. His progress stayed, he hung above the molten globe beneath him, imprisoned, unable to extricate himself from his position, buffeted, swirled about and swayed by the irresistible forces which warred around him in a never-ceasing tumult such as he had never conceived.

Something like a vague question as to his fate rather than any fear assailed him, something like a blind wonder. The force which held him was one beyond his experience or knowledge. He knew that a true spirit, a pure ego, could not wholly perish, yet now he asked himself what would be the effect of close proximity to such an enormous center of elemental activity upon an ego not wholly sublimated, such as his.

His will power actually faltered, staggered. For the time being he lost his ability to chose his course. He had willed himself here, and here he was, but he found himself unable to will himself back or anywhere else, in fact. The sensation crept through his soul that he was a plaything of fate, a mad ego which had ventured too far, dared too much, sought to learn those things possibly forbidden, hence caught in a net of universal law, woven about him by his own mad thirst for knowledge—a spirit doomed by its own daring to an eternity of something closely approaching the orthodox hell.

Through eons of time, as it seemed to him, he hung above that blazing orb, surrounded by seething gases which dimmed but did not wholly obscure his vision. Then a change began taking place. A great spot of darkness appeared on the pulsing body of the sun. It widened swiftly. About it the fiery elements of molten mass seemed to center their main endeavor. Vast streamers of flaming gas leaped and darted about its spreading center. It stretched and spread.

To Croft's fascinated vision it showed a mighty, funnel-like chasm, reaching down for thousands of miles into the very heart of their solar mass. And suddenly he knew that once more he was sinking, was being drawn down, down, to be engulfed in that terrible throat of the ter-

rifing funnel, swept and sucked down like a bit of driftwood into the maw of a whirlpool, powerless to resist.

Down he sank, down, between walls of living fire which swirled about him with an inconceivable velocity of revolution. The vapors which closed about him seemed to stifle even his spirit senses. Down, down, how far he had no conception. He had lost all control, all conscious power to judge of time or distance. Yet he was able still to see. And so at last he sensed that the fiery walls were coming swiftly together.

For a wild instant he conceived himself engulfed. Then he knew that he was being thrown out and upward again with terrific force, literally crowded forth with the outrushing gases between the collapsing walls, and hurled again into space.

Darkness came down, a darkness so deep it seemed a thousand suns might not pierce it through with their rays. Sirius, the great sun, seemed blotted out. He was seized by a sense of falling through that Stygian shroud. In which direction he knew not, or why or how. He knew only that his ego over which he had lost control was swirling in vast spirals down and down through an endless void to an endless fate—that he who had come so confidently forth to explore the universal secrets had become a waif in the uncharted immensity of the eternal universe.

The sensation went on and on. So much he knew. Still he was conscious. The thought came to him that this was his punishment for daring to know. Still conscious, he must be still bound by natural law. Had he broken that law and been cast into utter darkness, to remain forever conscious of his fate? Yet if so, where was he falling, where was he to wander, and for how long? His senses reeled.

By degrees, however, he fought back to some measure of control. His very necessity prompted the attempt. And by degrees there came to him a sense of not being any longer alone. In the almost palpable darkness it seemed that other shapes and forms, whose warp and woof was darkness also, floated and writhed about him as he fell.

They thrust against him; they gibbered soundlessly at him. They taunted him as he passed. And yet their very presence helped him in the end. He called his own knowledge to his assistance. He recognized these shapes of terror as those elementals of which occult teaching spoke, things which roamed in the darkness, which had as yet never been able to reach out and gain a soul for themselves.

With understanding came again the power of independent action. Unknowing whither, Croft willed himself out of their midst to some spot unnamed, where he might gain a spiritual moment of rest—to the nearest bit of matter afloat in the universal void. Abruptly he became aware of

the near presence of some solid substance, the sense of falling ended, and he knew that his will had found expression in fact.

Yet wherever it was he had landed, the region was dead. Like the moon, it was wholly devoid of moisture or atmosphere. The presence of solid matter, however, gave him back a still further sense of control. Though he was still enveloped in darkness, he reasoned that if this was a planet and possessed of a sun in its system, its farther side must be bathed in light. Reason also told him that in all probability he was still within the system of Sirius despite the seemingly endless distance he had come.

Exerting his will, he passed over the darkened face and emerged on the other side in the midst of a ghostly light. At once he became conscious of his surroundings, of a valley and encircling lofty mountains. From the sides of the latter came the peculiar light. Examination showed Croft that it was given off by some substance which glowed with a phosphorescence sufficient to cast faint shadows of the rocks which strewn the dead and silent waste.

Not knowing where he was, loath to dare again the void, hardly knowing whether to will himself back to earth or remain and abide the issue of his own adventure, Croft waited, debating the question, until at length the top of a mountain lighted as if from a rising sun. Inside a few moments the valley was bathed in light; he saw the great sun Sirius wheel up the morning sky.

Peace came into his soul. He was still a conscious ego, still a creature in the universe of light. He gazed about. Close to the line of the horizon, and shining with what was plainly reflected light, he saw the vast outlines of another planet he had failed to note until now.

He understood. This was the major planet, surely one of the Dog Star's pack; and he had alighted on one of its moons. All desire to remain there left him. He was tired of dead worlds, of bottomless voids.

As before on the moon itself, he felt a resurgent desire to bathe in an atmosphere of life. By now, fairly himself again, the wish was father to the fact. Summoning his will, he made the final step of his journey, as it was to prove, and found himself standing on a world not so vastly different from his own.

He stood on the side of a mountain in the midst of an almost tropic vegetation. Giant trees were about him, giant ferns sprouted from the soil. But here, as on earth, the color of the leaves was green. Through a break in the forest he gazed across a vast, wide-flung plain through which a mighty river made its way. Its waters glinted in the rays of the rising

sun. Its banks were lined with patches of what he knew from their appearance were cultivated fields. Beyond them was a dun track, reminding him of the arid stretches of a desert, reaching out as far as his vision could plumb the distance.

He turned his eyes and followed the course of the river. By stages of swift interest he traced it to a point where it disappeared beneath what seemed the dull red walls of a mighty city. They were huge walls, high and broad, bastioned and towered, flung across the course of the river, which ran on through the city itself, passed beyond a farther wall, and—beyond that again there was the glint of silver and blue in Croft's eyes—the shimmer of a vast body of water—whether lake or ocean he did not know then.

The call of a bird brought his attention back. Life was waking in the mountain forest where he stood. Gay-plumaged creatures, not unlike earthly parrots, were fluttering from tree to tree. The sound of a grunting came toward him. He swung about. His eyes encountered those of other life. A creature such as he had never seen was coming out of a quivering mass of sturdy fern. It had small, beady eyes and a snout like a pig. Two tusks sprouted from its jaws like the tusks of a boar. But the rest of the body, although something like that of a hog, was covered with a long wool-like hair, fine and seemingly almost silken soft.

This, as he was to learn later, was the tabur, an animal still wild on Palos, though domesticated and raised both for its hair, which was woven into fabrics, and for its flesh, which was valued as food. While Croft watched, it began rooting about the foot of a tree on one side of the small glade where he stood. Plainly it was hunting for something to eat.

Once more he turned to the plain and stood lost in something new. Across the dun reaches of the desert, beyond the green region of the river, was moving a long dark string of figures, headed toward the city he had seen. It was like a caravan, Croft thought, in its arrangement, save that the moving objects which he deemed animals of some sort, belonged in no picture of a caravan such as he had ever seen.

Swiftly he willed himself toward them and moved along by their side. Something like amazement filled his being. These beasts were such creatures as might have peopled the earth in the Silurian age. They were huge, twice the size of an earthly elephant. They moved in a majestic fashion, yet with a surprising speed. Their bodies were covered with a hairless skin, reddish pink in color, wrinkled and warted and plainly extremely thick. It slipped and slid over the muscles beneath it as they swung forward on their four massive legs, each one of which ended in a five-toed foot armed with short heavy claws.

But it was the head and neck and tail of the things which gave

Croft pause. The head was more that of a sea-serpent or a monster lizard than anything else. The neck was long and flexible and curved like that of a camel. The tail was heavy where it joined the main spine, but thinned rapidly to a point. And the crest of head and neck, the back of each creature, so far as he could see, was covered with a sort of heavy scale, an armor devised by nature for the thing's protection, as it appeared. Yet he could not see very well, since each Sarpelca, as he was to learn their Palosian name, was loaded heavily with bundles and bales of what might be valuable merchandise.

And on each sat a man. Croft hesitated not at all to give them that title, since they were strikingly like the men of earth in so far as he could see. They had heads and arms and legs and a body, and their faces were white. Their features departed in no particular, so far as he could see, from the faces of earth, save that all were smooth, with no evidence of hair on upper lip or cheek or chin.

They were clad in loose cloak-like garments and a hooded cap or cowl. They sat the Sarpelcas just back of the juncture of the body and neck, and guided the strange-appearing monsters by means of slender reins affixed to two of the fleshy tentacles which sprouted about the beasts' almost snakelike mouths.

That this strange cortege was a caravan Croft was now assured. He decided to follow it to the city and inspect that as well. Wherefore he kept on beside it down the valley, along what he now saw was a well-defined and carefully constructed road, built of stone, cut to a nice approximation, along which the unwieldy procession made good time. The road showed no small knowledge of engineering. It was like the roads of Ancient Rome, Croft thought with quickened interest. It was in a perfect state of preservation and showed signs of recent mending here and there. While he was feeling a quickened interest in this the caravan entered the cultivated region along the river, and Croft gave his attention to the fields.

The first thing he noted here was the fact that all growth was due to irrigation, carried out by means of ditches and laterals very much as on earth at the present time. Here and there as the caravan passed down the splendid road he found a farmer's hut set in a bower of trees. For the most part they were built of a tan-colored brick, and roofed with a thatching of rushes from the river's bank. He saw the natives working in the fields, strong-bodied men, clad in what seemed a single short-skirted tunic reaching to the knees, with the arms and lower limbs left bare.

One or two stopped work and stood to watch the caravan pass, and Croft noticed that their faces were intelligent, well featured, and their

hair for the most part a sort of rich, almost chestnut brown, worn rather long and wholly uncovered or else caught about the brows by a cincture which held a bit of woven fabric draped over the head and down the neck.

Travel began to thicken along the road. The natives seemed heading to the city, to sell the produce of their fields. Croft found himself drawing aside in the press as the caravan overtook the others and crowded past. So real had it become to him that for the time he forgot he was no more than an impalpable, invisible thing these people could not contact or see. Then he remembered and gave his attention to what he might behold once more.

They had just passed a heavy cart drawn by two odd creatures, resembling deer save that they were larger and possessed of hoofs like those of earth-born horses, and instead of antlers sported two little horns not over six inches long. They were in color almost a creamy white, and he fancied them among the most beautiful forms of animal life he had ever beheld. On the cart itself were high-piled crates of some unknown fowl, as he supposed—some edible bird, with the head of a goose, the plumage of a pheasant so far as its brilliant coloring went, long necks and bluish, webbed feet. Past the cart they came upon a band of native women carrying baskets and other burdens, strapped to their shoulders. Croft gave them particular attention, since as yet he had seen only men.

The Palosian females were fit mates, he decided, after he had given them a comprehensive glance. They were strong limbed and deep breasted. These peasant folks at least were simply clad. Like the men, they wore but a single garment, falling just over the bend of the knees and caught together over one shoulder with an embossed metal button, so far as he could tell. The other arm and shoulder were left wholly bare, as were their feet and legs, save that they wore coarse sandals of wood, strapped by leather thongs about ankle and calf. Their baskets were piled with vegetables and fruit, and they chattered and laughed among themselves as they walked.

And now as the Sarpelcas shuffled past, the highway grew actually packed. Also it drew nearer to the river and the city itself. The caravan thrust its way through a drove of the taburs—the wooly hogs such as Croft had seen on the side of the mountain. The hogsherd, rough, powerful, bronzed fellows, clad in hide aprons belted about their waists and nothing else, stalked beside their charges and exchanged heavy banter with the riders of the Sarpelcas as the caravan passed.

From behind a sound of shouting reached Croft's ears. He glanced around. Down the highway, splitting the throng of early market people, came some sort of conveyance, drawn by four of the beautiful creamy

deerlike creatures he had seen before. They were harnessed abreast and had nodding plumes fixed to the head bands of their bridles in front of their horns. These plumes were all of a purple color, and from the way the crowds gave way before the advance of the equipage, Croft deemed that it bore some one of note. Even the captain of the Sarpelca train, noting the advance of the gorgeous team, drew his huge beasts to the side of the road and stood up in his seatlike saddle to face inward as it passed.

The vehicle came on. Croft watched intently as it approached. So nearly as he could tell, it was a four-wheeled conveyance something like an old-time chariot in front, where stood the driver of the cream-white steeds, and behind that protected from the sun by an arched cover draped on each side with a substance not unlike heavy silk. These draperies, too, were purple in shade, and the body and wheels of the carriage seemed fashioned from something like burnished copper, as it glistened brightly in advance.

Then it was upon them, and Croft could look squarely into the shaded depths beneath the cover he now saw to be supported by upright metal rods, save at the back where the body continued straight up in a curve to form the top.

The curtains were drawn back since the morning air was still fresh, and Jason gained a view of those who rode. He gave them one glance and mentally caught his breath. There were two passengers in the coach—a woman and a man. The latter was plainly past middle age, well built, with a strongly set face and hair somewhat sprinkled with gray. He was clad in a tunic the like of which Croft had never seen, since it seemed woven of gold, etched and embroidered in what appeared stones or jewels of purple, red, and green. This covered his entire body and ended in half sleeves below which his forearms were bare.

He wore a jeweled cap supporting a single spray of purple feathers. From an inch below his knees his legs were encased in what seemed an open-meshed casing of metal, in color not unlike his tunic, jointed at the ankles to allow of motion when he walked. There were no seats proper in the carriage, but rather a broad padded couch upon which both passengers lay.

So much Croft saw. and then, forsaking the caravan, let himself drift along beside the strange conveyance to inspect the girl. In fact, after the first swift glance at the man, he had no eyes save for his companion in the coach.

She was younger than the man, yet strangely like him in a feminine way—more slender, more graceful as she lay at her ease. Her face was a

perfect oval, framed in a wealth of golden hair, which, save for a jeweled cincture, fell unrestrained about her shoulders in a silken flood. Her eyes were blue—the purple blue of the pansy—her skin, seen on face and throat and bared left shoulder and arm, a soft, firm white. For she was dressed like the peasant women, save in a richer fashion. Her single robe was white, lustrous in its sheen. It was brodered with a simple jeweled margin at throat and hem and over the breasts with stones of blue and green.

Her girdle was of gold in color, catching her just above the hips with long ends and fringe which fell down the left side of the knee-length skirt. Sandals of the finest imaginable skin were on the soles of her slender pink-nailed feet, bare save for a jewel-studded toe and instep band, and the lacing cords which were twined about each limb as high as the top of the calf. On her left arm she wore a bracelet, just above the wrist, as a single ornament.

Croft gave her one glance which took in every detail of her presence and attire. He quivered as with a chill. Some change as cataclysmic as his experience of the night before above the Dog Star itself took place in his spiritual being. He felt drawn toward this beautiful girl of Palos as he had never in all his life on earth been drawn toward a woman before.

It was as though suddenly he had found something he had lost—as though he had met one known and forgotten and now once more recognized. Without giving the act the slightest thought of consideration, he willed himself into the coach between the fluttering curtains of purple silk, and crouched down on the padded platform at her feet.



September?, 1918

# FRIEND ISLAND

by Francis Stevens

& Francis Stevens was the pen name of Gertrude Bennett, widow of the Englishman Stewart Bennett, whom she married in 1909. She was born Gertrude Barrows in Minneapolis on September 18, 1884, and after her marriage took up residence in Philadelphia. Her husband was lost on a treasure-hunting expedition, when a violent storm sank his boat, leaving her in 1910 with an eight-month-old daughter.

She secured a secretarial position at the University of Pennsylvania to support her child and supplemented her income with spare-time typing for students. The death of her father about 1915 or 1916 added the responsibility of her near-invalidated mother. Her landlady, Annie Orloff, had taken care of her daughter while she worked at the university, but could not accept responsibility for her mother. Gertrude Bennett left her job after she sold *The Nightmare* to ALL-STORY WEEKLY in 1916 for \$250. The fifty-thousand words for *Labyrinth* brought her \$400 in 1917; she got \$50 for *Friend Island*, \$30 for *Behind the Curtain*, \$90 for *Elf Trap*, and \$850 for *Citadel of Fear*, all in 1918.

During 1919 she sold a novel, *The Heads of Cerebus*, to Street & Smith's THRILL BOOK, and a short story never listed on any bibliography before, *Unseen—Unfeared* (PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE, February 10, 1919), a science-fiction tale concerning the illusion of monstrous bacteria.

She quit writing when her mother died, probably in 1920, and resumed her secretarial work.

When her daughter married, probably in the early 1930's, Mrs. Bennett moved to California. The final words she is known to have written were in a letter to her daughter dated September 1, 1939. A response was returned undelivered, and nothing further is known concerning her after that date.

Francis Stevens was the most gifted woman writer of science fantasy be-

tween Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and C. L. Moore. She was greatly admired by A. Merritt. She had a flare for creating images of sheer imagination from the printed word, and despite her penchant for horror themes, the ripple of laughter that threads her works discounts the notion of intellectual morbidity.

Francis Stevens was the only woman to rate with the leaders in the art of the scientific romance. She wrote at a time when women had not yet received the vote, when they were fighting for equality, but in the future of *Friend Island* that battle has been won. The narrator is a retired *woman* sea captain. It is a remarkable piece of work and it seems to be directed more at women despite its satiric jibes at men's weaknesses. Perhaps Francis Stevens, widowed early, with a child to support by her pen, did not find men as useless as does the lead character of this story or did not magnify their faults out of all proportion in the wrong way.

IT WAS UPON the waterfront that I first met her, in one of the shabby little tea shops frequented by able sailoresses of the poorer type. The uptown, glittering resorts of the Lady Aviators' Union were not for such as she.

Stern of feature, bronzed by wind and sun, her age could only be guessed, but I surmised at once that in her I beheld a survivor of the age of turbines and oil engines—a true sea-woman of that elder time when woman's superiority to man had not been so long recognized. When, to emphasize their victory, women in all ranks were sterner than today's need demands.

The spruce, smiling young maidens—engine-women and stokers of the great aluminum rollers, but despite their profession, very neat in gold-braided blue knickers and boleros—these looked askance at the hard-faced relic of a harsher day, as they passed in and out of the shop.

I, however, brazenly ignoring similar glances at myself, a mere male intruding on the haunts of the world's ruling sex, drew a chair up beside the veteran. I ordered a full pot of tea, two cups and a plate of macaroons, and put on my most ingratiating air. Possibly my unconcealed admiration and interest were wiles not exercised in vain. Or the macaroons and tea, both excellent, may have loosened the old sea-woman's tongue. At any rate, under cautious questioning, she had soon launched upon a series of reminiscences well beyond my hopes for color and variety.

"When I was a lass," quoth the sea-woman, after a time, "there was none of this high-flying, gilt-edged, leather-stockings luxury about the

sea. We sailed by the power of our oil and gasoline. If they failed on us, like as not 'twas the rubber ring and the rolling wave for ours."

She referred to the archaic practice of placing a pneumatic affair called a life-preserver beneath the arms, in case of that dreaded disaster, now so unheard of, shipwreck.

"In them days there was still many a man bold enough to join our crews. And I've knowed cases," she added condescendingly, "where just by the muscle and brawn of such men some poor sailor lass has reached shore alive that would have fed the sharks without 'em. Oh, I ain't so down on men as you might think. It's the spoiling of them that I don't hold with. There's too much preached nowadays that man is fit for nothing but to fetch and carry and do nurse-work in big child-homes. To my mind, a man who hasn't the nerve of a woman ain't fitted to father children, let alone raise 'em. But that's not here nor there. My time's past, and I know it, or I wouldn't be setting here gossipin' to you, my lad, over an empty teapot."

I took the hint, and with our cups replenished, she bit thoughtfully into her fourteenth macaroon and continued.

"There's one voyage I'm not likely to forget, though I live to be as old as Cap'n Mary Barnacle, of the *Shouter*. 'Twas aboard the old *Shouter* that this here voyage occurred, and it was her last and likewise Cap'n Mary's. Cap'n Mary, she was then that decrepit, it seemed a mercy that she should go to her rest, and in good salt water at that.

"I remember the voyage for Cap'n Mary's sake, but most I remember it because 'twas then that I come the nighest in my life to committin' matrimony. For a man, the man had nerve; he was nearer bein' companionable than any other man I ever seed; and if it hadn't been for just one little event that showed up the—the *mannishness* of him, in a way I couldn't abide, I reckon he'd be keepin' house for me this minute."

"We cleared from Frisco with a cargo of silkateen petticoats for Brisbane. Cap'n Mary was always strong on petticoats. Leather breeches or even half-skirts would ha' paid far better, they being more in demand like, but Cap'n Mary was three-quarters owner, and says she, land women should buy petticoats, and if they didn't it wouldn't be the Lord's fault nor hers for not providing 'em.

"We cleared on a fine day, which is an all sign—or was, then when the weather and the seas o' God still counted in the trafficking of the humankind. Not two days out we met a whirling, mucking bouncer of a gale that well nigh threw the old *Shouter* a full point off her course in the first wallop. She was a stout craft, though. None of your feather-weight, gas-lightened, paper-thin alloy shells, but toughened aluminum

from stern to stern. Her turbine drove her through the combers at a forty-five knot clip, which named her a speedy craft for a freighter in them days.

"But this night, as we tore along through the creaming green billows, something unknown went 'way wrong down below.

"I was forward under the shelter of her long over-sloop, looking for a hairpin I'd dropped somewheres about that afternoon. It was a gold hairpin, and gold still being mighty scarce when I was a girl, a course I valued it. But suddenly I felt the old *Shouter* give a jump under my feet like a plane struck by a shell in full flight. Then she trembled all over for a full second, frightened like. Then, with the crash of dooms-day ringing in my ears, I felt myself sailing through the air right into the teeth o' the shrieking gale, as near as I could judge. Down I come in the hollow of a monstrous big wave, and as my ears doused under I thought I heard a splash close by. Coming up, sure enough, there close by me was floating a new, patent, hermetic, thermo-ice-chest. Being as it was empty, and being as it was shut up air-tight, that ice-chest made as sweet a life-preserver as a woman could wish in such an hour. About ten foot by twelve, it floated high in the raging sea. Out on its top I scrambled, and hanging on by a handle I looked expectant for some of my poor fellow-women to come floating by. Which they never did, for the good reason that the *Shouter* had blowed up and went below, petticoats, Cap'n Mary and all."

"What caused the explosion?" I inquired.

"The Lord and Cap'n Mary Barnacle can explain," she answered piously. "Besides the oil for her turbines, she carried a power of gasoline for her alternative engines, and likely 'twas the cause of her ending so sudden like. Anyways, all I ever seen of her again was the empty ice-chest that Providence had well-nigh hove upon my head. On that I sat and floated, and floated and sat some more, till by-and-by the storm sort of blowed itself out, the sun come shining—this was next morning—and I could dry my hair and look about me. I was a young lass, then, and not bad to look upon. I didn't want to die, any more than you that's sitting there this minute. So I up and prays for land. Sure enough toward evening a speck heaves up low down on the horizon. At first I took it for a gas liner, but later found it was just a little island, all alone by itself in the great Pacific Ocean.

"Come, now, here's luck, thinks I, and with that I deserts the ice-chest, which being empty, and me having no ice to put in it, not likely to have in them latitudes, is of no further use to me. Striking out I swum a mile or so and set foot on dry land for the first time in nigh three days.

"Pretty land it were, too, though bare of human life as an iceberg in the Arctic.

"I had landed on a shining white beach that run up to a grove of lovely, waving palm trees. Above them I could see the slopes of a hill so high and green it reminded me of my own old home, up near Couquomgomoc Lake in Maine. The whole place just seemed to smile and smile at me. The palms waved and bowed in the sweet breeze, like they wanted to say, 'Just set right down and make yourself to home. We've been waiting a long time for you to come.' I cried, I was that happy to be made welcome. I was a young lass then, and sensitive-like to how folks treated me. You're laughing now, but wait and see if or not there was sense to the way I felt.

"So I up and dries my clothes and my long, soft hair again, which was well worth drying, for I had far more of it than now. After that I walked along a piece, until there was a sweet little path meandering away into the wild woods.

"Here, thinks I, this looks like inhabitants. Be they civil or wild, I wonder? But after traveling the path a piece, lo and behold it ended sudden like in a wide circle of green grass, with a little spring of clear water. And the first thing I noticed was a slab of white board nailed to a palm tree close to the spring. Right off I took a long drink, for you better believe I was thirsty, and then I went to look at this board. It had evidently been tore off the side of a wooden packing box, and the letters was roughly printed in lead pencil.

" 'Heaven help whoever you be,' I read. 'This island ain't just right. I'm going to swim for it. You better too. Good-by. Nelson Smith.' That's what it said, but the spellin' was simply awful. It all looked quite new and recent, as if Nelson Smith hadn't more than a few hours before he wrote and nailed it there.

"Well, after reading that queer warning I begun to shake all over like in a chill. Yes, I shook like I had the ague, though the hot tropic sun was burning down right on me and that alarming board. What had scared Nelson Smith so much that he had swum to get away? I looked all around real cautious and careful, but not a single frightening thing could I behold. And the palms and the green grass and the flowers still smiled that peaceful and friendly like. 'Just make yourself to home,' was wrote all over the place in plainer letters than those sprawly lead pencil ones on the board.

"Pretty soon, what with the quiet and all, the chill left me. Then I thought, 'Well, to be sure, this Smith person was just an ordinary man, I reckon, and likely he got nervous of being so alone. Likely he just fancied things which was really not. It's a pity he drowned himself

before I come, though likely I'd have found him poor company. By his record I judge him a man of but common education.'

"So I decided to make the most of my welcome, and that I did for weeks to come. Right near the spring was a cave, dry as a biscuit box, with a nice floor of white sand. Nelson had lived there too, for there was a litter of stuff—tin cans—empty—scraps of newspapers and the like. I got to calling him Nelson in my mind, and then Nelly, and wondering if he was dark or fair, and how he come to be cast away there all alone, and what was the strange events that drove him to his end. I cleaned out the cave, though. He had devoured all his tin-canned provisions, however he come by them, but this I didn't mind. That there island was a generous body. Green milk-coconuts, sweet berries, turtle eggs and the like was my daily fare.

"For about three weeks the sun shone every day, the birds sang and the monkeys chattered. We was all one big, happy family, and the more I explored that island the better T liked the company I was keeping. The land was about ten miles from beach to beach, and never a foot of it that wasn't sweet and clean as a private park.

"From the top of the hill I could see the ocean, miles and miles of blue water, with never a sign of a gas liner, or even a little government running-boat. Them running-boats used to go most everywhere to keep the seaways clean of derelicts and the like. But I knowed that if this island was no more than a hundred miles off the regular courses of navigation, it might be many a long day before I'd be rescued. The top of the hill, as I found when first I climbed up there, was a wore-out crater. So I knowed that the island was one of them volcanic ones you run across so many of in the seas between Capricorn and Cancer.

"Here and there on the slopes and down through the jungly tree-growth, T would come on great lumps of rock, and these must have came up out of that crater long ago. If there was lava it was so old it had been covered up entire with green growing stuff. You couldn't have found it without a spade, which I didn't have nor want."

"Well, at first I was happy as the hours was long. I wandered and clambered and waded and swum, and combed my long hair on the beach, having fortunately not lost my side-combs nor the rest of my gold hairpins. But by-and-by it begun to get just a bit lonesome. Funny thing, that's a feeling that, once it starts, it gets worse and worser so quick it's perfectly surprising. And right then was when the days begun to get gloomy. We had a long, sickly hot spell, like I never seen before on an ocean island. There was dull clouds across the sun from morn to night. Even the little monkeys and parrakeets, that had seemed so

gay, moped and drowsed like they was sick. All one day I cried, and let the rain soak me through and through—that was the first rain we had—and I didn't get thorough dried even during the night, though I slept in my cave. Next morning I got up mad as thunder at myself and all the world.

"When I looked out the black clouds was billowing across the sky. I could hear nothing but great breakers roaring in on the beaches, and the wild wind raving through the lashing palms.

"As I stood there a nasty little wet monkey dropped from a branch almost on my head. I grabbed a pebble and slung it at him real vicious. 'Get away, you dirty little brute!' I shrieks, and with that there come a awful blinding flare of light. There was a long, crackling noise like a bunch of Chinese fireworks, and then a sound as if a whole fleet of *Shoiieters* had all went up together.

"When I come to. T found myself 'way in the back of my cave, trying to dig further into the rock with my finger nails. Upon taking thought, it come to me that what had occurred was just a lightning-clap, and going to look, sure enough there lay a big palm tree right across the glade. It was all busted and split open by the lightning, and the little monkey was under it, for I could see his tail and his hind legs sticking out.

"Now, when I set eyes on that poor, crushed little beast I'd been so mean to, T was terrible ashamed. I sat down on the smashed tree and considered and considered. How thankful I had ought to have been. Here I had a lovely, plenteous island, with food and water to my taste, when it might have been a barren, starvation rock that was my lot. And so, thinking, a sort of gradual peaceful feeling stole over me. I got cheerfuller and cheerfuller, till I could have sang and danced for joy.

"Pretty soon I realized that the sun was shining bright for the first time that week. The wind had stopped hollering, and the waves had died to just a singing murmur on the beach. It seemed kind o' strange, this sudden peace, like the cheer in my own heart after its rage and storm. I rose up, feeling sort of queer, and went to look if the little monkey had came alive again, though that was a fool thing, seeing he was laying all crushed up and very dead. I buried him under a tree root, and as I did it a conviction come to me.

"I didn't hardly question that conviction at all. Somehow, living there alone so long, perhaps my natural womanly intuition was stronger than ever before or since, and so I *knowned*. Then I went and pulled poor Nelson Smith's board off from the tree and tossed it away for the tide to carry off. That there board was an insult to my island!"

The sea-woman paused, and her eyes had a far-away look. It seemed

as if I and perhaps even the macaroons and tea were quite forgotten.

"Why did you think that?" I asked, to bring her back. "How could an island be insulted?"

She started, passed her hand across her eyes, and hastily poured another cup of tea.

"Because," she said at last, poising a macaroon in mid-air, "because that island—that particular island that I had landed on—had a heart!

"When I was gay, it was bright and cheerful. It was glad when I come, and it treated me right until I got that grouchy it had to mope from sympathy. It loved me like a friend. When I flung a rock at that poor little drenched monkey critter, it backed up my act with an anger like the wrath o' God, and killed its own child to please me! But it got right cheery the minute I seen the wrongness of my ways. Nelson Smith had no business to say, 'This island ain't just right,' for it was a righter place than ever I seen elsewhere. When I cast away that lying board, all the birds begun to sing like mad. The green milk-coconuts fell right and left. Only the monkeys seemed kind o' sad like still, and no wonder. You see, their own mother, the island, had rounded on one o' them for my sake!

"After that I was right careful and considerate. I named the island Anita, not knowing her right name, or if she had any. Anita was a pretty name, and it sounded kind of South Sea like. Anita and me got along real well together from that day on. It was some strain to be always gay and singing around like a dear duck of a canary bird, but I done my best. Still, for all the love and gratitude I bore Anita, the company of an island, however sympathetic, ain't quite enough for a human being. I still got lonesome, and there was even days when I couldn't keep the clouds clear out of the sky, though I will say we had no more tornadoes.

"I think the island understood and tried to help me with all the bounty and good cheer the poor thing possessed. None the less my heart give a wonderful big leap when one day I seen a blot on the horizon. It drew nearer and nearer, until at last I could make out its nature."

"A ship, of course," said I, "and were you rescued?"

"'Tweren't a ship, neither," denied the sea-woman somewhat impatiently. "Can't you let me spin this yarn without no more remarks and fool questions? This thing what was bearing down so fast with the incoming tide was neither more nor less than another island!

"You may well look startled. I was startled myself. Much more so than you, likely. I didn't know then what you, with your book-learning,



very likely know now—that islands sometimes float. Their underparts being a tangled-up mess of roots and old vines that new stuff's growed over, they sometimes break away from the mainland in a brisk gale and go off for a voyage, calm as a old-fashioned, eight-funnel steamer. This one was uncommon large, being as much as two miles, maybe, from shore to shore. It had its palm trees and its live things, just like my own Anita, and I've sometimes wondered if this drifting piece hadn't really been a part of my island once—just its daughter like, as you might say.

"Be that, however, as it might be, no sooner did the floating piece get within hailing distance than I hears a human holler and there was a man dancing up and down on the shore like he was plumb crazy. Next minute he had plunged into the narrow strip of water between us and in a few minutes had swum to where I stood.

"Yes, of course it was none other than Nelson Smith!

"I knowed that the minute I set eyes on him. He had the very look of not having no better sense than the man what wrote that board and then nearly committed suicide trying to get away from the best island in all the oceans. Glad enough he was to get back, though, for the coconuts was running very short on the floater what had rescued him, and the turtle eggs wasn't worth mentioning. Being short of grub is the surest way I know to cure a man's fear of the unknown."

"Well, to make a long story short, Nelson Smith told me he was a aeronauter. In them days to be an aeronauter was not the same as to be an aviatrix is now. There was dangers in the air, and dangers in the sea, and he had met with both. His gas tank had leaked and he had dropped into the water close by Anita. A case or two of provisions was all he could save from the total wreck.

"Now, as you might guess, I was crazy enough to find out what had scared this Nelson Smith into trying to swim the Pacific. He told me a story that seemed to fit pretty well with mine, only when it come to the scary part he shut up like a clam, that aggravating way some men have. I give it up at last for just man-foolishness, and we begun to scheme to get away.

"Anita moped some while we talked it over. I realized how she must be feeling, so I explained to her that it was right needful for us to get with our kind again. If we stayed with her we should probably quarrel like cats, and maybe even kill each other out of pure human cussedness. She cheered up considerable after that, and even, I thought, got a little anxious to have us leave. At any rate, when we begun to

provision up the little floater, which we had anchored to the big island by a cable of twisted bark, the green nuts fell all over the ground, and Nelson found more turtle nests in a day than I had in weeks.

"During them days I really got fond of Nelson Smith. He was a companionable body, and brave, or he wouldn't have been a professional aeronauter, a job that was rightly thought tough enough for a woman, let alone a man. Though he was not so well educated as me, at least he was quiet and modest about what he did know, not like some men, boasting most where there is least to brag of.

"Indeed, I misdoubt if Nelson and me would not have quit the sea and the air together and set up housekeeping in some quiet little town up in New England, maybe, after we had got away, if it had not been for what happened when we went. I never, let me say, was so deceived in any man before nor since. The thing taught me a lesson and I never was fooled again.

"We was all ready to go, and then one morning, like a parting gift from Anita, come a soft and favoring wind. Nelson and I run down the beach together, for we didn't want our floater to blow off and leave us. As we was running, our arms full of coconuts, Nelson Smith, stubbed his bare toe on a sharp rock, and down he went. I hadn't noticed, and was going on.

"But sudden the ground begun to shake under my feet, and the air was full of a queer, grinding, groaning sound, like the very earth was in pain.

"I turned around sharp. There sat Nelson, holding his bleeding toe in both fists and giving vent to such awful words as no decent sea-going lady would ever speak nor hear to!

" 'Stop it, stop it!' I shrieked at him, but 'twas too late.

"Island or no island, Anita was a lady, too! She had a gentle heart, but she knowed how to behave when she was insulted.

"With one terrible, great roar a spout of smoke and flame belched up out o' the heart of Anita's crater hill a full mile into the air!

"I guess Nelson stopped swearing. He couldn't have heard himself, anyways. Anita was talking now with tongues of flame and such roars as would have bespoke the raging protest of a continent.

"I grabbed that fool man by the hand and run him down to the water. We had to swim good and hard to catch up with our only hope, the floater. No bark rope could hold her against the stiff breeze that was now blowing, and she had broke her cable. By the time we scrambled aboard great rocks was falling right and left. We couldn't see each other for a while for the clouds of fine gray ash.

"It seemed like Anita was that mad she was flinging stones after us,

and truly I believe that such was her intention. I didn't blame her, neither!

"Lucky for us the wind was strong and we was soon out of range.

" 'So!' says I to Nelson, after I'd got most of the ashes out of my mouth, and shook my hair clear of cinders. 'So, that was the reason you up and left sudden when you was there before! You aggravated that island till the poor thing druv you out!'

" 'Well,' says he, and not so meek as I'd have admired to see him, 'how could I know the darn island was a lady?'

" 'Actions speak louder than words,' says I. 'You should have knowed it by her ladylike behavior!'

" 'Is volcanoes and slingin' hot rocks ladylike?' he says. 'Is snakes ladylike? T'other time I cut my thumb on a tin can, I cussed a little bit. Say—just a li'l' bit! An' what comes at me out o' all the caves, and out o' every crack in the rocks, and out o' the very spring o' water where I'd been drinkin'? Why snakes! *Snakes*, if you please, big, little, green, red and sky-blue-scarlet! What'd I do? Jumped in the water, of course. Why wouldn't I? I'd rather swim and drown than be stung or swallowed to death. But how was I t' know the snakes come outta the rocks because I cussed?'

" 'You, couldn't,' I agrees, sarcastic. 'Some folks never knows a lady till she up and whangs 'em over the head with a brick. A real, gentle, kind-like warning, them snakes were, which you would not heed! Take shame to yourself, Nelly,' says I, right stern, 'that a decent little island like Anita can't associate with you peaceable, but you must hurt her sacrest feelings with language no lady would stand by to hear!'

"I never did see Anita again. She may have blew herself right out of the ocean in her just wrath at the vulgar, disgustin' language of Nelson Smith. I don't know. We was took off the floater at last, and I lost track of Nelson just as quick as I could when we was landed at Frisco.

"He had taught me a lesson. A man is just full of mannishness, and the best of 'em ain't good enough for a lady to sacrifice her sensibilities to put up with.

"Nelson Smith, he seemed to feel real bad when he learned I was not for him, and then he apologized. But apologies weren't no use to me. I could never abide him, after the way he went and talked right in the presence of me and my poor, sweet lady friend, Anita!"

Now I am well versed in the lore of the sea in all ages. Through mists of time I have enviously eyed wild voyagings of sea rovers who roved and spun their yarns before the stronger sex came into its own, and ousted man from his heroic pedestal. I have followed—across the

printed page—the wanderings of Odysseus. Before Gulliver I have burned the incense of tranced attention; and with reverent awe considered the history of one Munchausen, a baron. But alas, these were only men!

In what field is not woman our subtle superior?

Meekly I bowed my head, and when my eyes dared lift again, the ancient mariness had departed, leaving me to sorrow for my surpassed and outdone idols. Also with a bill for macaroons and tea of such incredible proportions that in comparison therewith I found it easy to believe her story!

June 22, 1918

# THE MOON POOL

by A. Merritt

It is hard for devotees to understand that A. Merritt, despite his considerable following, belongs to the same school of writing and follows the tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs. The major divergence is that he weaves his adventures in a lacy atmosphere of the near-poetic, assisting the reader's escape into a time and place of fearful wonder. The result has been that he has survived every change in mode of science fiction, with never a year since the appearance of his first story when some of his works were not in print.

He was born Abraham Merritt, January 20, 1884, in Beverly, New Jersey, the son of Quaker parents. He attended lectures at the University of Pennsylvania, to become a lawyer but never finished because of inadequate finances. Instead, he accepted a job as a cub reporter on a Philadelphia newspaper at the age of nineteen. Eventually he rose to night editor of the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, predominantly due to his flair for covering lurid happenings of murder, executions, lynchings, and similarly gruesome events.

As a result of his work as Philadelphia correspondent for THE SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT of the Hearst newspapers, he was offered a position on that publication, which he accepted in 1912. THE SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT metamorphosed into the AMERICAN WEEKLY, and when its editor, Morrill Goddard, died in 1937, A. Merritt inherited the top spot. He died August 30, 1943, of a heart attack at Indian Rock Beach, Florida, where he had a vacation home.

In quantity, he produced relatively little in his lifetime: eight novels, two novelettes, six short stories, and an assortment of unfinished manuscripts, articles, and poems. He proved that volume is not the important criterion of a man's popularity, for *The Moon Pool*, *The Ship of Ishtar*, *Dwellers in a Mirage*, *Seven Footprints to Satan*, and *Creep, Shadow!* are among the most famed titles in the canon of fantastic literature.

Nothing new was completed by him the last nine years of his life, largely because of the demands that running the then immensely successful AMERICAN WEEKLY made on his time. ARGOSY printed all but a few of his short stories. At the end they paid him well, \$2,500 for *Burn Witch Burn.*, which ran about 53,000 words, and \$3,500 for *Creep, Shadow!*, which was 82,500 words in length, but his primary reason for contributing to them was an agreement, that they would never change a single word without permission. He regarded himself as an amateur writing for personal satisfaction and glory. He several times wrote short stories free of charge for amateur science-fiction fan magazines as a token of appreciation for the marvelous reader reception that audience had given him.

The long novelette *The Moon Pool*, which is reprinted in full here, was the work that virtually overnight created A. Merritt's reputation as a writer of scientific romances. It reveals all of his remarkable ability to create a colorful background, his adroit blending of fantasy and science, and his inspired talent to transmit an emotional mood along with his action. A sequel, *Conquest of the Moon Pool*, was combined with the original novelette for hardcover publication in 1919. In adapting the *The Moon Pool* for the book, A. Merritt very considerably condensed and rewrote the story. This appearance of *The Moon Pool* is the first time it has ever appeared, uncut and unchanged, in a book.

## 1. THE THROCKMARTIN MYSTERY

I AM breaking a long silence to clear the name of Dr. David Throckmartn and to lift the shadow of scandal from that of his wife and of Dr. Charles Stanton, his assistant. That I have not found the courage to do so before, all men who are jealous of their scientific reputations will understand when they have read the facts entrusted to me alone.

I shall first recapitulate what has actually been known of the Throckmartin expedition to the island of Ponape in the Carolines—the Throckmartin Mystery, as it is called.

Dr. Throckmartin set forth, you will recall, to make some observations of Nan-Matal, that extraordinary group of island ruins, remains of a high and prehistoric civilization, that are clustered along the vast shore of Ponape. With him went his wife to whom he had been wedded less than half a year. The daughter of Professor Frazier-Smith, she was as deeply interested and almost as well informed as he upon these relics of a vanished race that titanically strew certain islands of the Pacific and form the basis for the theory of a submerged Pacific continent.

Mrs. Throckmartin, it will be recalled, was much younger, fifteen

years at least, than her husband. Dr. Charles Stanton, who accompanied them as Dr. Throckmartin's assistant, was about her age. These three and a Swedish woman, Thora Helversen, who had been Edith Throckmartin's nurse in babyhood and who was entirely devoted to her, made up the expedition.

Dr. Throckmartin planned to spend a year among the ruins, not only of Ponape, but of Lele—the twin centers of that colossal riddle of humanity whose answer has its roots in immeasurable antiquity; a weird flower of man-made civilization that blossomed ages before the seeds of Egypt were sown; of whose arts we know little and of whose science and secret knowledge of nature nothing.

He carried with him complete equipment for his work and gathered at Ponape a dozen or so natives for laborers. They went straight to Metalanim harbor and set up their camp on the island called Uschen-Tau in the group known as the Nan-Matal. You will remember that these islands are entirely uninhabited and are shunned by the people on the main island.

Three months later Dr. Throckmartin appeared at Port Mooresby, Papua. He came on a schooner manned by Solomon Islanders and commanded by a Chinese half-breed captain. He reported that he was on his way to Melbourne for additional scientific equipment and whites to help him in his excavations, saying that the superstition of the natives made their aid negligible. He went immediately on board the steamer *Southern Queen* which was sailing that same morning. Three nights later he disappeared from the *Southern Queen* and it was officially reported that he had met death either by being swept overboard or by casting himself into the sea.

A relief-boat sent with the news to Ponape found the Throckmartin camp on the island Uschen-Tau and a smaller camp on the island called Nan-Tanach. All the equipment, clothing, supplies were intact. But of Mrs. Throckmartin, of Dr. Stanton, or of Thora Helversen they could find not a single trace!

The natives who had been employed by the archeologist were questioned. They said that the ruins were the abode of great spirits—*ani*—who were particularly powerful when the moon was at the full. On these nights all the islanders were doubly careful to give the ruins wide berth. Upon being employed, they had demanded leave from the day before full moon until it was on the wane and this had been granted them by Dr. Throckmartin. Thrice they had left the expedition alone on these nights. On their third return they had found the four white people gone and they "knew that the *ani* had eaten them." They were afraid and had fled.

That was all.

The Chinese half caste was found and reluctantly testified at last that he had picked Dr. Throckmartin up from a small boat about fifty miles off Ponape. The scientist had seemed half mad, but he had given the seaman a large sum of money to bring him to Port Moresby and to say, if questioned, that he had boarded the boat at Ponape harbor.

That is all that has been known to anyone of the fate of the Throckmartin expedition.

Why, you will ask, do I break silence now; and how came I in possession of the facts I am about to set forth?

To the first I answer: I was at the Geographical Club recently and I overheard two members talking. They mentioned the name of Throckmartin and I became an eavesdropper. One said:

"Of course what probably happened was that Throckmartin killed them all. It's a dangerous thing for a man to marry a woman so much younger than himself and then throw her into the necessarily close company of exploration with a man as young and as agreeable as Stanton was. The inevitable happened, no doubt. Throckmartin discovered; avenged himself. Then followed remorse and suicide."

"Throckmartin didn't seem to be that kind," said the other thoughtfully.

"No, he didn't," agreed the first.

"Isn't there another story?" went on the second speaker. "Something about Mrs. Throckmartin running away with Stanton and taking the woman, Thora, with her? Somebody told me they had been recognized in Singapore recently."

"You can take your pick of the two stories," replied the other man. "It's one or the other I suppose."

It was neither one nor the other of them. I know—and I will answer now the second question—because I was with Throckmartin when he—vanished. I know what he told me and I know what my own eyes saw. Incredible, abnormal, against all the known facts of our science as it was, I testify to it. And it is my intention, after this is published, to sail to Ponape, to go to the Nan-Matal and to the islet beneath whose frowning walls dwells the mystery that Throckmartin sought and found—and that at the last sought and found Throckmartin!

I will leave behind me a copy of the map of the islands that he gave me. Also his sketch of the great courtyard of Nan-Tanach, the location of the moon door, his indication of the probable location of the moon pool and the passage to it and his approximation of the position of the shining globes. If I do not return and there are any with enough belief,



scientific curiosity and courage to follow, these will furnish a plain trail.

I will now proceed straightforwardly with my narrative.

For six months I had been on the d'Entrecasteaux Islands gathering data for the concluding chapters of my book upon "Flora of the Volcanic Islands of the South Pacific." The day before, I had reached Port Moresby and had seen my specimens safely stored on board the *Southern Queen*. As I sat on the upper deck that morning I thought, with homesick mind, of the long leagues between me and Melbourne and the longer ones between Melbourne and New York.

It was one of Papua's yellow mornings, when she shows herself in her most somber, most baleful mood. The sky was a smoldering ocher. Over the island brooded a spirit sullen, implacable and alien; filled with the threat of latent, malefic forces waiting to be unleashed. It seemed an emanation from the untamed, sinister heart of Papua herself—sinister even when she smiles. And now and then, on the wind, came a breath from unexplored jungles, filled with unfamiliar odors, mysterious, and menacing.

It is on such mornings that Papua speaks to you of her immemorial ancientness and of her power. I am not unduly imaginative but it is a mood that makes me shrink—I mention it because it bears directly upon Dr. Throckmartin's fate. Nor is the mood Papua's alone. I have felt it in New Guinea, in Australia, in the Solomons and in the Carolines. But it is in Papua that it seems most articulate. It is as though she said: "I am the ancient of days; I have seen the earth in the throes of its shaping; I am the primeval; I have seen races born and die and, lo, in my breast are secrets that would blast you by the telling, you pale babes of a puling age. You and I ought not be in the same world; yet I am and I shall be! Never will you fathom me and you I hate though I tolerate! I tolerate—but how long?"

And then I seem to see a giant paw that reaches from Papua toward the outer world, stretching and sheathing monstrous claws.

All feel this mood of hers. Her own people have it woven in them, part of their web and woof; flashing into light unexpectedly like a soul from another universe; masking itself as swiftly.

I fought against Papua as every white man must on one of her yellow mornings. And as I fought I saw a tall figure come striding down the pier. Behind him came a Kapa-Kapa boy swinging a new valise. There was something familiar about the tall man. As he reached the gangplank he looked up straight into my eyes, stared at me for a moment and waved his hand. It was Dr. Throckmartin!

Coincident with my recognition of him there came a shock of surprise

that was definitely—unpleasant. It was Throckmartin—but there was something disturbingly different about him and the man I had known so well and had bidden farewell less than a year before. He was then, as you know, just turned forty, lithe, erect, muscular; the face of a student and of a seeker. His controlling expression was one of enthusiasm, of intellectual keenness, of—what shall I say—expectant search. His ever eagerly questioning brain had stamped itself upon his face.

I sought in my mind for an explanation of that which I had felt on the flash of his greeting. Hurrying down to the lower deck I found him with the purser. As I spoke he turned and held out to me an eager hand—and then I saw what the change was that had come over him!

He knew, of course, by my face the uncontrollable shock that my closer look had given me. His eyes filled and he turned briskly to the purser; then hurried off to his stateroom, leaving me standing, half dazed.

At the stair he half turned.

"Oh, Goodwin," he said. "I'd like to see you later. Just now—there's something I must write before we start—"

He went up swiftly.

"'E looks rather queer—eh?" said the purser. "Know 'im well, sir? Seems to 'ave given you quite a start, sir."

I made some reply and went slowly to my chair. I tried to analyze what it was that had disturbed me so; what profound change in Throckmartin that had so shaken me. Now it came to me. It was as though the man had suffered some terrific soul searing shock of rapture and horror combined; some soul cataclysm that in its climax had remolded his face deep from within, setting on it the seal of wedded joy and fear. As though indeed ecstasy supernal and terror infernal had once come to him hand in hand, taken possession of him, looked out of his eyes and, departing, left behind upon him ineradicably their shadow.

Alternately I looked out over the port and paced about the deck, striving to read the riddle; to banish it from my mind. And all the time still over Papua brooded its baleful spirit of ancient evil, unfathomable, not to be understood; nor had it lifted when the *Southern Queen* lifted anchor and steamed out into the gulf.

## 2. DOWN THE MOON PATH

I WATCHED WITH relief the shores sink down behind us; welcomed the touch of the free sea wind. We seemed to be drawing away from something malefic; something that lurked within the island spell I have

described, and the thought crept into my mind, spoke—whispered rather—from Throckmartin's face.

I had hoped—and within the hope was an inexplicable shrinking, an unexpressed dread—that I would meet Throckmartin at lunch. He did not come down and I was sensible of a distinct relief within my disappointment. All that afternoon I lounged about uneasily but still he kept to his cabin. Nor did he appear at dinner.

Dusk and night fell swiftly. I was warm and went back to my deck-chair. The *Southern Queen* was rolling to a disquieting swell and I had the place to myself.

Over the heavens was a canopy of cloud, glowing faintly and testifying to the moon riding behind it. There was much phosphorescence. Now and then, before the ship and at the sides, arose those strange little swirls of mist that steam up from the Southern Ocean like the breath of sea monsters, whirl for a moment and disappear. I lighted a cigarette and tried once more to banish Throckmartin's face from my mind.

Suddenly the deck door opened and through it came Throckmartin himself. He paused uncertainly, looked up at the sky with a curiously eager, intent gaze, hesitated, then closed the door behind him.

"Throckmartin," I called. "Come sit with me. It's Goodwin."

Immediately he made his way to me, sitting beside me with a gasp of relief that I noted curiously. His hand touched mine and gripped it with tenseness that hurt. His hand was icelike. I puffed up my cigarette and by its glow scanned him closely. He was watching a large swirl of the mist that was passing before the ship. The phosphorescence beneath it illumined it with a fitful opalescence. I saw fear in his eyes. The swirl passed; he sighed; his grip relaxed and he sank back.

"Throckmartin," I said, wasting no time in preliminaries. "What's wrong? Can I help you?"

He was silent.

"Is your wife all right and what are you doing here when I heard you had gone to the Carolines for a year?" I went on.

I felt his body grow tense again. He did not speak for a moment and then:

"I'm going to Melbourne, Goodwin," he said. "I need a few things—need them urgently. And more men—white men."

His voice was low; preoccupied. It was as though the brain that dictated the words did so perfunctorily, half impatiently; aloof, watching, strained to catch the first hint of approach of something dreaded.

"You are making progress then?" I asked. It was a banal question, put forth in a blind effort to claim his attention.

"Progress?" he repeated. "Progress—"

He stopped abruptly; rose from his chair, gazed intently toward the north. I followed his gaze. Far, far away the moon had broken through the clouds. Almost on the horizon, you could see the faint luminescence of it upon the quiet sea. The distant patch of light quivered and shook. The clouds thickened again and it was gone. The ship raced southward, swiftly.

Throckmartin dropped into his chair. He lighted a cigarette with a hand that trembled. The flash of the match fell on his face and I noted with a queer thrill of apprehension that its unfamiliar expression had deepened; become curiously intensified as though a faint acid had passed over it, etching its lines faintly deeper.

"It's the full moon tonight, isn't it?" he asked, palpably with studied inconsequence.

"The first night of full moon," I answered. He was silent again. I sat silent too, waiting for him to make up his mind to speak. He turned to me as though he had made a sudden resolution.

"Goodwin," he said. "I do need help. If ever man needed it, I do. Goodwin—can you imagine yourself in another world, alien, unfamiliar, a world of terror, whose unknown joy is its greatest terror of all; you all alone there; a stranger! As such a man would need help, so I need—"

He paused abruptly and arose to his feet stiffly; the cigarette dropped from his fingers. I saw that the moon had again broken through the clouds, and this time much nearer. Not a mile away was the patch of light that it threw upon the waves. Back of it, to the rim of the sea was a lane of moonlight; it was a gleaming gigantic serpent racing over the rim of the world straight and surely toward the ship.

Throckmartin gazed at it as though turned to stone. He stiffened to it as a pointer does to a hidden covey. To me from him pulsed a thrill of terror—but terror tinged with an unfamiliar, an infernal joy. It came to me and passed away—leaving me trembling with its shock of bitter sweet.

He bent forward, all his soul in his eyes. The moon path swept closer, closer still. It was now less than half a mile away. From it the ship fled; almost it came to me, as though pursued. Down upon it, swift and straight, a radiant torrent cleaving the waves, raced the moon stream. And then—

"Good God!" breathed Trockmartin, and if ever the words were a prayer and an invocation they were.

And then, for the first time—I saw—*it!*

The moon path, as I have said, stretched to the horizon and was

bordered by darkness. It was as though the clouds above had been parted to form a lane—drawn aside like curtains or as the waters of the Red Sea were held back to let the hosts of Israel through. On each side of the stream was the black shadow cast by the folds of the high canopies. And straight as a road between the opaque walls gleamed, shimmered and danced the shining, racing, rapids of moonlight.

Far, it seemed immeasurably far, along this stream of silver fire I sensed, rather than saw, something coming. It drew into sight as a deeper glow within the light. On and on it sped toward us—an opalescent mistiness that swept on with the suggestion of some winged creature in darting flight. Dimly there crept into my mind memory of the Dyak legend of the winged messenger of Buddha—the Akla bird whose feathers are woven of the moon rays, whose heart is a living opal, whose wings in flight echo the crystal clear music of the white stars—but whose beak is of frozen flame and shreds the souls of the unbelievers. Still it sped on, and now there came to me sweet, insistent tinklings—like a pizzicati on violins of glass, crystalline, as purest, clearest glass transformed to sound. And again the myth of the Akla bird came to me.

But now it was close to the end of the white path; close up to the barrier of darkness still between the ship and the sparkling head of the moon stream. And now it beat up against that barrier as a bird against the bars of its cage. And I knew that this was no mist born of sea and air. It whirled with shimmering plumes, with swirls of lacy light, with spirals of living vapor. It held within it odd, unfamiliar gleams as of shifting mother-of-pearl. Coruscations and glittering atoms drifted through it as though it drew them from the rays that bathed it.

Nearer and nearer it came, borne on the sparkling waves, and less and less grew the protecting wall of shadow between it and us. The crystalline sounds were louder—rhythmic as music from another planet.

Now I saw that within the mistiness was a core, a nucleus of intenser light—veined, opaline, effulgent, intensely alive. And above it, tangled in the plumes and spirals that throbbed and whirled were seven glowing lights.

Through all the incessant but strangely ordered movement of the—*thing*—these lights held firm and steady. They were seven—like seven little moons. One was of a pearly pink, one of delicate nacreous blue, one of lambent saffron, one of the emerald you see in the shallow waters of tropic isles; a deathly white; a ghostly amethyst; and one of the silver that is seen only when the flying fish leap beneath the moon. There they shone—these seven little varicolored orbs within the opaline mistiness of whatever it was that, poised and expectant, waited to be drawn to us on the light filled waves.

The tinkling music was louder still. It pierced the ears with a shower of tiny lances; it made the heart beat jubilantly—and checked it dolorously. It closed your throat with a throb of rapture and gripped it tight like the hand of infinite sorrow!

Came to me now a murmuring cry, stilling the crystal clear notes, it was articulate—but as though from something utterly foreign to this world. The ear took the cry and translated with conscious labor into the sounds of earth. And even as it compassed, the brain shrank from it irresistibly and simultaneously it seemed, reached toward it with irresistible eagerness.

"Av-o-lo-ha! Av-o-lo-ha!" So the cry seemed to throb.

The grip of Throckmartin's hand relaxed. He walked stiffly toward the front of the deck, straight toward the vision, now but a few yards away from the bow. I ran toward him and gripped him—and fell back. For now his face had lost all human semblance. Utter agony and utter ecstasy—there they were side by side, not resisting each other; unholy inhuman companions blending into a look that none of God's creatures should wear—and deep, deep as his soul! A devil and a god dwelling harmoniously side by side! So must Satan, newly fallen, still divine, seeing heaven and contemplating hell, have looked.

And then—swiftly the moon path faded! The clouds swept over the sky as though a hand had drawn them together. Up from the south came a roaring squall. As the moon vanished what I had seen vanished with it—blotted out as an image on a magic lantern; the tinkling ceased abruptly—leaving a silence like that which follows an abrupt and stupendous thunder clap. There was nothing about us but silence and blackness!

Through me there passed a great trembling as one who had stood on the very verge of the gulf wherein the men of the Louisades say lurks the fisher of the souls of men, and has been plucked back by sheerest chance.

Throckmartin passed an arm around me.

"It is as I thought," he said. In his voice was a new note; of the calm certainty that has swept aside a waiting terror of the unknown. "Now I know! Come with me to my cabin, old friend. For now that you too have seen I can tell you"—he hesitated—"what it was you saw," he ended.

As we passed through the door we came face to face with the ship's first officer. Throckmartin turned quickly, but not soon enough for the mate not to see and stare with amazement. His eyes turned questioningly to me.

With a strong effort of will Throckmartin composed his face into at least a semblance of normality.

"Are we going to have much of a storm?" he asked.

"Yes," said the mate. Then the seaman, getting the better of his curiosity, added, profanely: "We'll probably have it all the way to Melbourne."

Throckmartin straightened as though with a new thought. He gripped the officer's sleeve eagerly.

"You mean at least cloudy weather—for"—he hesitated—"for the next three nights, say?"

"And for three more," replied the mate.

"Thank God!" cried Throckmartin, and I think I never heard such relief and hope as was in his voice.

The sailor stood amazed. "Thank God?" he repeated. "Thank—what d'ye mean?"

But Throckmartin was moving onward to his cabin. I started to follow. The first officer stopped me.

"Your friend," he said, "is he ill?"

"The sea!" I answered hurriedly. "He's not used to it. I am going to look after him."

I saw doubt and disbelief in the seaman's eyes but I hurried on. For I knew now that Throckmartin was ill indeed—but that it was a sickness neither the ship's doctor nor any other could heal.

### 3. "DEAD! ALL DEAD!"

THROCKMARTIN WAS sitting on the side of his berth as I entered. He had taken off his coat. He was leaning over, face in hands.

"Lock the door," he said quietly, not raising his head. "Close the port-holes and draw the curtains—and—have you an electric flash in your pocket—a good, strong one?"

He glanced at the small pocket flash I handed him and clicked it on. "Not big enough I'm afraid," he said. "And after all"—he hesitated—"it's only a theory."

"What's only a theory?" I asked in astonishment.

"Thinking of it as a weapon against—what you saw," he said, with a wry smile.

"Throckmartin," I cried. "What was it? Did I really see—that thing—there in the moon path? Did I really hear—"

"This for instance," he interrupted.

Softly he whispered: "Av-o-lo-ha!" With the murmur I seemed to hear

again the crystalline unearthly music; an echo of it, faint, sinister, mocking, jubilant.

"Throckmartin," I said. "What was it? What are you flying from, man? Where is your wife—and Stanton?"

"Dead!" he said monotonously. "Dead! All dead!" Then as I recoiled in horror—"All dead. Edith, Stanton, Thora—dead—or worse. And Edith in the moon pool—with them—drawn by what you saw on the moon path—and that wants me—and that has put its brand upon me—and pursues me."

With a vicious movement he ripped open his shirt.

"Look at this," he said. I gazed. Around his chest, an inch above his heart, the skin was white as pearl. The whiteness was sharply defined against the healthy tint of the body. He turned and I saw it ran around his back. It circled him. The band made a perfect cincture about two inches wide.

"Burn it!" he said, and offered me his cigarette. I drew back. He gestured—peremptorily. I pressed the glowing end of the cigarette into the ribbon of white flesh. He did not flinch nor was there odor of burning nor, as I drew the little cylinder away, any mark upon the whiteness.

"Feel it!" he commanded again. I placed my fingers upon the band. It was cold—like frozen marble.

He handed me a small penknife.

"Cut!" he ordered. This time, my scientific interest fully aroused, I did so without reluctance. The blade cut into flesh. I waited for the blood to come. None appeared. I drew out the knife and thrust it in again, fully a quarter of an inch deep. I might have been cutting paper so far as any evidence followed that what T was piercing was human skin and muscle.

Another thought came to me and I drew back, revolted.

"Throckmartin," I whispered. "Not leprosy!"

"Nothing so easy," he said. "Look again and find the places you cut."

I looked, as he bade me, and in the white ring there was not a single mark. Where I had pressed the blade there was no trace. It was as though the skin had parted to make way for the blade and closed.

Throckmartin arose and drew his shirt about him.

"Two things you have seen," he said. "*It*—and its mark—the seal it placed on me that gives it, I think, the power to follow me. Seeing, you must believe my story. Goodwin, I tell you again that my wife is dead—or worse—I do not know; the prey of—what you saw; so, too, is Stanton; so Thora. How—" He stopped for a moment. Then continued:

"And I am going to Melbourne for the things to empty its den and its shrine; for dynamite to destroy it and its lair—if anything made on



earth will destroy it; and for white men with courage to use them. Perhaps—perhaps after you have heard, you will be one of these men?" He looked at me a bit wistfully. "And now—do not interrupt me, I beg of you, till I am through—for"—he smiled wanly—"the mate may be wrong. And if he is"—he arose and paced twice about the room—"if he is I may not have time to tell you."

"Throckmartin," I answered, "I have no closed mind. Tell me—and if I can I will help."

He took my hand and pressed it.

"Goodwin," he began, "if I have seemed to take the death of my wife lightly—or rather"—his face contorted—"or rather—if I have seemed to pass it by as something not of first importance to me—believe me it is not so. If the rope is long enough—if what the mate says is so—if there is cloudy weather until the moon begins to wane—I can conquer—that I know. But if it does not—if the dweller in the moon pool gets me—then must you or some one avenge my wife—and me—and Stanton. Yet I cannot believe that God would let a thing like that conquer! But why did He then let it take my Edith? And why does He allow it to exist? Are there things stronger than God, do you think, Goodwin?"

He turned to me feverishly. I hesitated.

"I do not know just how you define God," I said. "If you mean the will to know, working through science—"

He waved me aside impatiently.

"Science," he said. "What is our science against—that? Or against the science of whatever cursed, vanished race that made it—or made the way for it to enter this world of ours?"

With an effort he regained control of himself.

"Goodwin," he said, "do you know at all of the ruins on the Carolines; the cyclopean, megalithic cities and harbors of Ponape and Lele, of Kusaie, of Ruk and Hogolu, and a score of other islets there? Particularly, do you know of the Nan-Matal and Metalanim?"

"Of the Metalanim I have heard and seen photographs," I said. "They call it don't they, the Lost Venice of the Pacific?"

"Look at this map," said Throckmartin. He handed me the map. "That," he went on, "is Christian's map of Metalanim harbor and the Nan-Matal. Do you see the rectangles marked Nan-Tanach?"

"Yes," I said.

"There," he said, "under those walls is the moon pool and the seven gleaming lights that raise the dweller in the pool and the altar and shrine of the dweller. And there in the moon pool with it lie Edith and Stanton and Thora."

"The dweller in the moon pool?" I repeated half-incredulously.

"The thing you saw," said Throckmartin solemnly.

A solid sheet of rain swept the ports, and the *Southern Queen* began to roll on the rising swells. Throckmartin drew another deep breath of relief, and drawing aside a curtain peered out into the night. Its blackness seemed to reassure him. At any rate, when he sat again he was calm.

"There are no more wonderful ruins in the world than those of the island Venice of Metalanim on the east shore of Ponape," he said almost casually. "They take in some fifty islets and cover with their intersecting canals and lagoons about twelve square miles. Who built them? None knows! When were they built? Ages before the memory of present man, that is sure. Ten thousand, twenty thousand, a hundred thousand years ago—the last more likely.

"All these islets, Goodwin, are squared, and their shores are frowning sea-walls of gigantic basalt blocks hewn and put in place by the hands of ancient man. Each inner water-front is faced with a terrace of those basalt blocks which stand out six feet above the shallow canals that meander between them. On the islets behind these walls are cyclopean and time-shattered fortresses, palaces, terraces, pyramids; immense courtyards, strewn with ruins—and all so old that they seem to wither the eyes of those who look on them.

"There has been a great subsidence. You can stand out of Metalanim harbor for three miles and look down upon the tops of similar monolithic structures and walls twenty feet below you in the water.

"And all about, strung on their canals, are the bulwarked islets with their enigmatic giant walls peering through the dense growths of mangroves—dead, deserted for incalculable ages; shunned by those who live near.

"You as a botanist are familiar with the evidence that a vast shadowy continent existed in the Pacific—a continent that was not rent asunder by volcanic forces as was that legendary one of Atlantis in the Eastern Ocean. My work in Java, in Papua, and in the Ladrões had set my mind upon this Pacific lost land. Just as the Azores are believed to be the last high peaks of Atlantis, so evidence came to me steadily that Ponape and Lele and their basalt bulwarked islets were the last points of the slowly sunken western land clinging still to the sunlight, and had been the last refuge and sacred places of the rulers of that race which had lost their immemorial home under the rising waters of the Pacific.

"I believed that under these ruins I might find the evidence of what I sought. Time and again I had encountered legends of subterranean networks beneath the Nan-Matal, of passages running back into the main island itself; basalt corridors that followed the lines of the shallow canals and ran under them to islet after islet, linking them in mysterious chains.

"My—my wife and I had talked before we were married of making this our great work. After the honeymoon we prepared for the expedition. It was to be my monument. Stanton was as enthusiastic as ourselves. We sailed, as you know, last May in fulfilment of our dreams.

"At Ponape we selected, not without difficulty, workmen to help us—diggers. I had to make extraordinary inducements before I could get together my force. Their beliefs are gloomy, these Ponapeans. They people their swamps, their forests, their mountains and shores with malignant spirits—*ani* they call them. And they are afraid—bitterly afraid of the isles of ruins and what they think the ruins hide. I do not wonder—now! For their fear has come down to them, through the ages, from the people 'before their fathers,' as they call them, who, they say, made these mighty spirits their slaves and messengers.

"When they were told where they were to go, and how long we expected to stay, they murmured. Those who, at last, were tempted made what I thought then merely a superstitious proviso that they were to be allowed to go away on the three nights of the full moon. If only I had heeded them and gone, too!"

He stopped and again over his face the lines etched deep.

"We passed," he went on, "into Metalanim harbor. Off to our left—a mile away arose a massive quadrangle. Its walls were all of forty feet high and hundreds of feet on each side. As we passed it our natives grew very silent; watched it furtively, fearfully. I knew it for the ruins that are called Nan-Tanach, the 'place of frowning walls.' And at the silence of my men I recalled what Christian had written of this place; of how he had come upon its 'ancient platforms and tetragonal enclosures of stonework; its wonder of tortuous alleyways and labyrinth of shallow canals; grim masses of stonework peering out from behind verdant screens; cyclopean barricades. And now, when we had turned into its ghostly shadows, straightaway the merriment of our guides was hushed and conversation died down to whispers. For we were close to Nan-Tanach—the place of lofty walls, the most remarkable of all the Metalanim ruins." He arose and stood over me.

"Nan-Tanach, Goodwin," he said solemnly—"a place where merriment is hushed indeed and words are stifled; Nan-Tanach—where the moon pool lies hidden—lies hidden behind the moon rock, but sends its diabolic soul out—even through the prisoning stone." He raised clenched hands. "Oh, Heaven," he breathed, "grant me that I may blast it from earth!"

He was silent for a little time.

"Of course I wanted to pitch our camp there," he began again quietly, "but I soon gave up that idea. The natives were panic-stricken—

threatened to turn back. 'No,' they said, 'too great *ani* there. We go to any other place—but not there.' Although, even then, I felt that the secret of the place was in Nan-Tanach, I found it necessary to give in. The laborers were essential to the success of the expedition, and I told myself that after a little time had passed and I had persuaded them that there was nothing anywhere that could molest them, we would move our tents to it. We finally picked for our base the islet called Uschen-Tau—you see it here—" He pointed to the map. "It was close to the isle of desire, but far enough away from it to satisfy our men. There was an excellent camping-place there and a spring of fresh water. It offered, besides, an excellent field for preliminary work before attacking the larger ruins. We pitched our tents, and in a couple of days the work was in full swing."

#### 4. THE MOON ROCK

"I DO NOT intend to tell you now," Throckmartin continued, "the results of the next two weeks, Goodwin, nor of what we found. Later—if I am allowed I will lay all that before you. It is sufficient to say that at the end of those two weeks I had found confirmation of many of my theories, and we were well under way to solve a mystery of humanity's youth—so we thought. But enough. I must hurry on to the first stirrings of the inexplicable thing that was in store for us.

"The place, for all its decay and desolation, had not infected us with any touch of morbidity—that is not Edith, Stanton or myself. My wife was happy—never had she been happier. Stanton and she, while engrossed in the work as much as I, were of the same age, and they frankly enjoyed the companionship that only youth can give youth. I was glad—never jealous.

"But Thora was very unhappy. She was a Swede, as you know, and in her blood ran the beliefs and superstitions of the Northland—some of them so strangely akin to those of this far southern land; beliefs of spirits of mountain and forest and water—werewolves and beings malign. From the first she showed a curious sensitivity to what, I suppose, may be called the 'influences' of the place. She said it 'smelled' of ghosts and warlocks.

"I laughed at her then—but now I believe that this sensitivity of what we call primitive people is perhaps only a clearer perception of the unknown which we, who deny the unknown, have lost.

"A prey to these fears, Thora always followed my wife about like a shadow; carried with her always a little sharp hand-ax, and although

we twitted her about the futility of chopping fantoms with such a weapon she would not relinquish it.

"Two weeks slipped by, and at their end the spokesman for our natives came to us. The next night was the full of the moon, he said. He reminded me of my promise. They would go back to their village next morning; they would return after the third night, as at that time the power of the *ani* would begin to wane with the moon. They left us sundry charms for our 'protection,' and solemnly cautioned us to keep as far away as possible from Nan-Tanach during their absence—although their leader politely informed us that, no doubt, we were stronger than the spirits. Half-exasperated, half-amused I watched them go.

"No work could be done without them, of course, so we decided to spend the days of their absence junketing about the southern islets of the group. Under the moon the ruins were inexpressibly weird and beautiful. We marked down several spots for subsequent exploration, and on the morning of the third day set forth along the east face of the breakwater for our camp on Uschen-Tau, planning to have everything in readiness for the return of our men the next day.

"We landed just before dusk, tired and ready for our cots. It was only a little after ten o'clock when Edith awakened me.

" 'Listen!' she said. 'Lean over with your ear close to the ground!' I did so, and seemed to hear, far, far below, as though coming up from great distances, a faint chanting. It gathered strength, died down, ended; began, gathered volume, faded away into silence.

" 'It's the waves rolling on rocks somewhere,' I said. 'We're probably over some ledge of rock that carries the sound.'

" 'It's the first time I've heard it,' replied my wife doubtfully. We listened again. Then through the dim rhythms, deep beneath us, another sound came. It drifted across the lagoon that lay between us and Nan-Tanach in little tinkling waves. It was music—of a sort; I won't describe the strange effect it had upon me. You've felt it—"

"You mean on the deck?" I asked. Throckmartin nodded.

"I went to the flap of the tent," he continued, "and peered out. As I did so Stanton lifted his flap and walked out into the moonlight, looking over to the other islet and listening. I called to him.

" 'That's the queerest sound!' he said. He listened again. 'Crystalline! Like little notes of translucent glass. Like the bells of crystal on the sistrums of Isis at Dendarah Temple,' he added half-dreamily. We gazed intently at the island. Suddenly, on the gigantic sea-wall, moving slowly, rhythmically, we saw a little group of lights. Stanton laughed.

" 'The beggars!' he exclaimed. 'That's why they wanted to get away, is it? Don't you see, Dave, it's some sort of a festival—rites of some

kind that they hold during the full moon! That's why they were so eager to have us *keep* away, too.'

"I felt a curious sense of relief, although I had not been sensible of any oppression. The explanation seemed good. It explained the tinkling music and also the chanting—worshipers, no doubt, in the ruins—their voices carried along passages I now knew honeycombed the whole Nan-Matal.

" 'Let's slip over,' suggested Stanton—but I would not.

" 'They're a difficult lot as it is,' I said. 'If we break into one of their religious ceremonies they'll probably never forgive us. Let's keep out of any family party where we haven't been invited.'

" 'That's so,' agreed Stanton.

"The strange tinkling music, if music it can be called, rose and fell, rose and fell—now laden with sorrow, now filled with joy.

" 'There's something—something very unsettling about it,' said Edith at last soberly. 'I wonder what they make those sounds with. They frighten me half to death, and, at the same time, they make me feel as though some enormous rapture was just around the corner.'

"I had noted this effect, too, although I had said nothing of it. And at the same time there came to me a clear perception that the chanting which had preceded it had seemed to come from a vast multitude—thousands more than the place we were contemplating could possibly have held. Of course, I thought, this might be due to some acoustic property of the basalt; an amplification of sound by some gigantic sounding-board of rock; still—

" 'It's devilish uncanny!' broke in Stanton, answering my thought.

"And as he spoke the flap of Thora's tent was raised and out into the moonlight strode the old Swede. She was the great Norse type—tall, deep-breasted, molded on the old Viking lines. Her sixty years had slipped from her. She looked like some ancient priestess of Odin." He hesitated. "She knew," he said slowly, "something more far-seeing than my science had given her sight. She warned me—she warned me! Fools and mad that we are to pass such things by without heed!" He brushed a hand over his eyes.

"She stood there," he went on. "Her eyes were wide, brilliant, staring. She thrust her head forward toward Nan-Tanach, regarding the moving lights; she listened. Suddenly she raised her arms and made a curious gesture to the moon. It was—an archaic—movement; she seemed to drag it from remote antiquity—yet in it was a strange suggestion of power. Twice she repeated this gesture and—the tinkling died away! She turned to us.

" 'Go!' she said, and her voice seemed to come from far distances.

'Go from here—and quickly! Go while you may. They have called—' She pointed to the islet. 'They know you are here. They wait.' Her eyes widened further. 'It is there,' she wailed. 'It beckons—the—the—'

"She fell at Edith's feet, and as she fell over the lagoon came again the tinklings, now with a quicker note of jubilation—almost of triumph.

"We ran to Thora, Stanton and I, and picked her up. Her head rolled and her face, eyes closed, turned as though drawn full into the moonlight. I felt in my heart a throb of unfamiliar fear—for her face had changed again. Stamped upon it was a look of mingled transport and horror—alien, terrifying, strangely revolting. It was"—he thrust his face close to my eyes—"what you see in mine!"

For a dozen heart-beats I stared at him, fascinated; then he sank back again into the half-shadow of the berth.

"I managed to hide her face from Edith," he went on. "I thought she had suffered some sort of a nervous seizure. We carried her into her tent. Once within the unholy mask dropped from her, and she was again only the kindly, rugged old woman. I watched her throughout the night. The sounds from Nan-Tanach continued until about an hour before moonset. In the morning Thora awoke, none the worse, apparently. She had had bad dreams, she said. She could not remember what they were—except that they had warned her of danger. She was oddly sullen, and I noted that throughout the morning her gaze returned again half-fascinatedly, half-wonderingly to the neighboring isles.

"That afternoon the natives returned. They were so exuberant in their apparent relief to find us well and intact that Stanton's suspicions of them were confirmed. He slyly told their leader that 'from the noise they had made on Nan-Tanach the night before they must have thoroughly enjoyed themselves.'

"I think I never saw such stark terror as the Ponapean manifested at the remark! Stanton himself was so plainly startled that he tried to pass it over as a jest. He met poor success! The men seemed panic-stricken, and for a time I thought they were about to abandon us—but they did not. They pitched their camp at the western side of the island—out of sight of Nan-Tanach. I noticed that they built large fires, and whenever I awoke that night I heard their voices in slow, minor chant—one of their song 'charms,' I thought drowsily, against evil *ani*. I heard nothing else; the place of frowning walls was wrapped in silence—no lights showed. The next morning the men were quiet, a little depressed, but as the hours wore on they regained their spirits, and soon life at the camp was going on just as it had before.

"You will understand, Goodwin, how the occurrences I have related would excite the scientific curiosity. We rejected immediately, of course,

any explanation admitting the supernatural. Why not? Except the curiously disquieting effects of the tinkling music and Thora's behavior there was nothing to warrant any such fantastic theories—even if our minds had been the kind to harbor them.

"We came to the conclusion that there must be a passageway between Ponape and Nan-Tanach, known to the natives—and used by them during their rites. Ceremonies were probably held in great vaults or caverns beneath the ruins.

"We decided at last that on the next departure of our laborers we would set forth immediately to Nan-Tanach. We would investigate during the day, and at evening my wife and Thora would go back to camp, leaving Stanton and me to spend the night on the island, observing from some safe hiding-place what might occur.

"The moon waned; appeared crescent in the west; waxed slowly toward the full. Before the men left us they literally prayed us to accompany them. Their importunities only made us more eager to see what it was that, we were now convinced, they wanted to conceal from us. At least that was true of Stanton and myself. It was not true of Edith. She was thoughtful, abstracted—reluctant. Thora, on the other hand, showed an unusual restlessness, almost an eagerness to go. Goodwin"—he paused—"Goodwin, I know now that the poison was working in Thora—and that women have perceptions that we men lack—forebodings, sensings. I wish to Heaven I had known it then—Edith!" he cried suddenly. "Edith—come back to me! Forgive me!"

I stretched the decanter out to him. He drank deeply. Soon he had regained control of himself.

"When the men were out of sight around the turn of the harbor," he went on, "we took our boat and made straight for Nan-Tanach. Soon its mighty sea-wall towered above us. We passed through the water-gate with its gigantic hewn prisms of basalt and landed beside a half-submerged pier. In front of us stretched a series of giant steps leading into a vast court strewn with fragments of fallen pillars. In the center of the court, beyond the shattered pillars, rose another terrace of basalt blocks, concealing, I knew, still another enclosure.

"And now, Goodwin, for the better understanding of what follows and to guide you, should I—not be able—to accompany you when you go there, listen carefully to my description of this place: Nan-Tanach is literally three rectangles. The first rectangle is the sea-wall, built up of monoliths. Gigantic steps lead up from the landing of the sea-gate through the entrance to the courtyard.

"This courtyard is surrounded by another, inner basalt wall.

"Within the courtyard is the second enclosure. Its terrace, of the



same basalt as the outer walls, is about twenty feet high. Entrance is gained to it by many breaches which time has made in its stonework. This is the inner court, the heart of Nan-Tanach! There lies the great central vault with which is associated the one name of living being that has come to us out of the mists of the past. The natives say it was the treasure-house of Chau-te-leur, a mighty king who reigned long 'before their fathers.' As Chau is the ancient Ponapean word both for sun and king, the name means 'place of the sun king.'

"And opposite this place of the sun king is the moon rock that hides the moon pool.

"It was Stanton who first found what I call the moon rock. We had been inspecting the inner courtyard; Edith and Thora were getting together our lunch. I forgot to say that we had previously gone all over the islet and had found not a trace of living thing. I came out of the vault of Chau-te-leur to find Stanton before a part of the terrace studying it wonderingly.

" 'What do you make of this?' he asked me as I came up. He pointed to the wall. I followed his finger and saw a slab of stone about fifteen feet high and ten wide. At first all I noticed was the exquisite nicety with which its edges joined the blocks about it. Then I realized that its color was subtly different—tinged with gray and of a smooth, peculiar—deadness.

" 'Looks more like calcite than basalt.' I said. I touched it and withdrew my hand quickly, for at the contact every nerve in my arm tingled as though a shock of frozen electricity had passed through it. It was not cold as we know cold that I felt. It was a chill force—the phrase I have used—frozen electricity—describes it better than anything else. Stanton looked at me oddly.

" 'So you felt it, too,' he said. I was wondering whether I was developing hallucinations like Thora. Notice, by the way, that the blocks beside it are quite warm beneath the sun.'

"T felt them and touched the grayish stone again. The same faint shock ran through my hand—a tingling chill that had in it a suggestion of substance, of force. We examined the slab more closely. Its edges were cut as though by an engraver of jewels. They fitted against the neighboring blocks in almost a hair-line. Its base, we saw, was slightly curved, and fitted as closely as top and sides upon the huge stones on which it rested. And then we noted that these stones had been hollowed to follow the line of the gray stone's foot. There was a semicircular depression running from one side of the slab to the other. It was as though the gray rock stood in the center of a shallow cup—revealing half, covering half. Something about this hollow attracted me. I reached down and felt it. Goodwin, although the balance of the stones that formed it, like all the

stones of the courtyard, were rough and age-worn—this was as smooth, as even surfaced as though it just left the hands of the polisher.

" 'It's a door!' exclaimed Stanton. 'It swings around in that little cup. That's what make the hollow so smooth.'

" 'Maybe you're right,' I replied. 'But how the devil can we open it?'

"We went over the slab again—pressing upon its edges, thrusting against its sides. During one of those efforts I happened to look up—and cried out. For a foot above and on each side of the corner of the gray rock's lintel I had seen a slight convexity, visible only from the angle at which my gaze struck it. These bosses on the basalt were circular, eighteen inches in diameter, as we learned later, and at the center extended two inches only beyond the face of the terrace. Unless one looked directly up at them while leaning against the moon rock—for this slab, Goodwin, *is* the moon rock—they were invisible. And none would dare stand there!

"We carried with us a small scaling-ladder, and up this T went. The bosses were apparently nothing more than chiseled curvatures in the stone. I laid my hand on the one I was examining, and drew it back so sharply I almost threw myself from the ladder. In my palm, at the base of my thumb, I had felt the same shock that I had in touching the slab below. I put my hand back. The impression came from a spot not more than an inch wide. I went carefully over the entire convexity, and six times more the chill ran through my arm. There were, Goodwin, seven circles an inch wide in the curved place, each of which communicated the precise sensation I have described. The convexity on the opposite side of the slab gave precisely the same results. But no amount of touching or of pressing these spots singly or in any combination gave the slightest promise of motion to the slab itself.

" 'And yet—they're what open it,' said Stanton positively.

" 'Why do you say that?' I asked.

" T—don't know,' he answered hesitatingly. 'But something tells me so. Throck,' he went on half earnestly, half laughingly, 'the purely scientific part of me is fighting the purely human part of me. The scientific part is urging me to find some way to get that slab either down or open. The human part is just as strongly urging me to do nothing of the sort and get away while I can!'

"He laughed again—shamefacedly.

" 'Which will it be?' he asked—and T thought that in his tone the human side of him was ascendant.

" 'It will probably stay as it is—unless we blow it to bits,' I said.

" T thought of that,' he answered, 'and—I wouldn't dare,' he added somberly enough. And even as I had spoken there came to me the same feeling that he had expressed. It was as though something passed out of

the gray rock that struck my heart as a hand strikes an impious lip. We turned away—uneasily, and faced Thora coming through a breach in the terrace.

" 'Miss Edith wants you quick,' she began—and stopped. I saw her eyes go past me and widen. She was looking at the gray rock. Her body grew suddenly rigid; she took a few stiff steps forward and ran straight to it. We saw her cast herself upon its breast, hands and face pressed against it; heard her scream as though her very soul was being drawn from her—and watched her fall at its foot. As we picked her up I saw steal from her face the look I had observed when I first heard the crystal music of Nan-Tanach—that unhuman mingling of opposites!"

## 5. AV-O-LO-HA

"WE CARRIED Thora back, down to where Edith was waiting. We told her what had happened and what we had found. She listened gravely, and as we finished Thora sighed and opened her eyes.

" 'T would like to see the stone,' she said. 'Charles, you stay here with Thora.' We passed through the outer court silently—and stood before the rock. She touched it, drew back her hand as I had; thrust it forward again resolutely and held it there. She seemed to be listening. Then she turned to me.

" 'David,' said my wife, and the wistfulness in her voice hurt me—• 'David, would you be very, very disappointed if we went from here—without trying to find out any more about it—would you?'

"Goodwin, I never wanted anything so much in my life as I wanted to learn what that rock concealed. You will understand—the cumulative curiosity that all the happenings had caused; the certainty that before me was an entrance to a place that, while known to the natives—for T still clung to that theory—was utterly unknown to any man of my race; that within, ready for my finding, was the answer to the stupendous riddle of these islands and a lost chapter in the history of humanity. There before me—and was I asked to turn away, leaving it unread!

"Nevertheless, I tried to master my desire, and I answered—'Edith, not a bit if you want us to do it.'

"She read my struggle in my eyes. She looked at me searchingly for a moment and then turned back toward the gray rock. I saw a shiver pass through her. I felt a tinge of remorse and pity!

" 'Edith,' I exclaimed, 'we'll go!'

"She looked at me hard. 'Science is a jealous mistress,' she quoted. 'No, after all it may be just fancy. At any rate, you can't run away. No! But, Dave, I'm going to stay too!'

" 'You are not!' I exclaimed. 'You're going back to the camp with Thora. Stanton and I will be all right.'

" 'I'm going to stay,' she repeated. And there was no changing her decision. As we neared the others she laid a hand on my arm.

" 'Dave,' she said, 'If there should be something—well—inexplicable tonight—something that seems—too dangerous—will you promise to go back to our own islet tomorrow, or, while we can, and wait until the natives return?'

"I promised eagerly—for the desire to stay and see what came with the night was like a fire within me.

"And would to Heaven I had not waited another moment, Goodwin; would to Heaven I had gathered them all together then and sailed back on the instant through the mangroves to Uschen-Tau!

"We found Thora on her feet again and singularly composed. She claimed to have no more recollection of what had happened after she had spoken to Stanton and to me in front of the gray rock than she had after the seizure on Uschen-Tau. She grew sullen under our questioning, precisely as she had before. But to my astonishment, when she heard of our arrangements for the night, she betrayed a febrile excitement that had in it something of exultance.

"We had picked a place about five hundred feet away from the steps leading into the outer court.

"We settled down just before dusk to wait for whatever might come. I was nearest the giant steps; next to me Edith; then Thora, and last Stanton. Each of us had with us automatic pistols, and all, except Thora, had rifles.

"Night fell. After a time the eastern sky began to lighten, and we knew that the moon was rising; grew lighter still, and the orb peeped over the sea; swam suddenly into full sight. Edith gripped my hand, for, as though the full emergence into the heavens had been a signal, we heard begin beneath us the deep chanting. It came from illimitable depths.

"The moon poured her rays down upon us, and I saw Stanton start. On the instant I caught the sound that had roused him. It came from the inner enclosure. It was like a long, soft sighing. It was not human; seemed in some way—mechanical. I glanced at Edith and then at Thora. My wife was intently listening. Thora sat, as she had since we had placed ourselves, elbows on knees, her hands covering her face.

"And then suddenly from the moonlight flooding us there came to me a great drowsiness. Sleep seemed to drip from the rays and fall upon my eyes, closing them—closing them inexorably. I felt Edith's hand relax in mine, and under my own heavy lids saw her nodding. I saw Stanton's head fall upon his breast and his body sway drunkenly. I tried to rise—to fight against the profound desire for slumber that pressed in on me.

"And as I fought I saw Thora raise her head as though listening; saw her rise and turn her face toward the gateway. For a moment she gazed, and my drugged eyes seemed to perceive within it a deeper, stronger radiance. Thora looked at us. There was infinite despair in her face—and expectancy. I tried again to rise—and a surge of sleep rushed over me. Dimly, as I sank within it, I heard a crystalline chiming; raised my lids once more with a supreme effort, saw Thora, bathed in light, standing at the top of the stairs, and then—sleep took me for its very own—swept me into the very heart of oblivion!

"Dawn was breaking when I wakened. Recollection rushed back on me and I thrust a panic-stricken hand out toward Edith; touched her and felt my heart give a great leap of thankfulness. She stirred, sat up, rubbing dazed eyes. I glanced toward Stanton. He lay on his side, back toward us, head in arms.

"Edith looked at me laughingly. 'Heavens! What sleep!' she said. Memory came to her. Her face paled. 'What happened?' she whispered. 'What made us sleep like that?' She looked over to Stanton, sprang to her feet, ran to him, shook him. He turned over with a mighty yawn, and I saw relief lighten her face as it had lightened my heart.

"Stanton raised himself stiffly. He looked at us. 'What's the matter?' he exclaimed. 'You look as though you've seen ghosts!'

"Edith caught my hands. 'Where's Thora?' she cried. Before T could answer she ran out into the open calling: 'Thora! Thora!'

"Stanton stared at me. 'Taken!' was all I could say. Together we went to my wife, now standing beside the great stone steps, looking up fearfully at the gateway into the terraces. There I told them what T had seen before sleep had drowned me. And together then we ran up the stairs, through the court and up to the gray rock.

"The gray rock was closed as it had been the day before, nor was there trace of its having opened. No trace! Even as I thought this Edith dropped to her knees before it and reached toward something lying at its foot. It was a little piece of gray silk. I knew it for part of the kerchief Thora wore about her hair. Edith took the fragment; hesitated. I saw then that it had been *cut* from the kerchief as though by a razor-edge; I saw, too, that a few threads ran from it—down toward the base of the slab; ran to the base of the gray rock and—under it! The gray rock was a door! And it had opened and Thora had passed through it!

"I think, Goodwin, that for the next few minutes we all were a little insane. We beat upon that diabolic entrance with our hands, with stones and clubs. At last reason came back to us. Stanton set forth for the camp to bring back blasting powder and tools. While he was gone Edith and T searched the whole islet for any other clue. We found not a trace of

Thora nor any indication of any living being save ourselves. We went back to the gateway to find Stanton returned.

"Goodwin, during the next two hours we tried every way in our power to force entrance through the slab. The rock within effective blasting radius of the cursed door resisted our drills. We tried explosions at the base of the slab with charges covered by rock. They made not the slightest impression on the surface beneath, expending their force, of course, upon the slighter resistance of their coverings.

"Afternoon found us hopeless, so far as breaking through the rock was concerned. Night was coming on and before it came we would have to decide our course of action. I wanted to go to Ponape for help. But Edith objected that this would take hours and after we had reached there it would be impossible to persuade our men to return with us that night, if at all. What then was left? Clearly only one of two choices: to go back to our camp and wait for our men to return and on their return try to persuade them to go with us to Nan-Tanach. But this would mean the abandonment of Thora for at least two days. We could not do it; it would have been too cowardly.

"The other choice was to wait where we were for night to come; to wait for the rock to open as it had the night before, and to make a sortie through it for Thora before it could close again. With the sun had come confidence; at least a shattering of the mephitic mists of superstition with which the strangeness of the things that had befallen us had clouded for a time our minds. In that brilliant light there seemed no place for phantoms.

"The evidence that the slab had opened was unmistakable, but might not Thora simply have *found* it open through some mechanism, still working after ages, and dependent for its action upon laws of physics unknown to us upon the full light of the moon? The assertion of the natives that the *ani* had greatest power at this time might be a far-flung reflection of knowledge which had found ways to use forces contained in moonlight, as we have found ways to utilize the forces in the sun's rays. If so, Thora was probably behind the slab, sending out prayers to us for help.

"But how explain the sleep that had descended upon us? Might it not have been some emanation from plants or gaseous emanations from the island itself? Such things were far from uncommon, we agreed. In some way, the period of their greatest activity might coincide with the period of the moon, but if this were so why had not Thora also slept?

"As dusk fell we looked over our weapons. Edith was an excellent shot with both rifle and pistol. With the idea that the impulse toward sleep was the result either of emanations such as I have described or man made, we constructed rough-and-ready but effective neutralizers, which we placed over our mouths and nostrils. We had decided that my wife

was to remain in the hollow spot. Stanton would take up a station on the far side of the stairway and I would place myself opposite him on the side near Edith. The place I picked out was less than five hundred feet from her, and I could reassure myself now as to her safety, as I looked down upon the hollow wherein she crouched. As the phenomena had previously synchronized with the rising of the moon, we had no reason to think they would occur any earlier this night.

"A faint glow in the sky heralded the moon. I kissed Edith, and Stanton and I took our places. The moon dawn increased rapidly; the disk swam up, and in a moment it seemed was shining in full radiance upon ruins and sea.

"As it rose there came as on the night before the curious little sighing sound from the inner terrace. I saw Stanton straighten up and stare intently through the gateway, rifle ready. Even at the distance he was from me, I discerned amazement in his eyes. The moonlight within the gateway thickened, grew stronger. I watched his amazement grow into sheer wonder.

"I arose.

" 'Stanton, what do you see?' I called cautiously. He waved a silencing hand. I turned my head to look at Edith. A shock ran through me. She lay upon her side. Her face was turned full toward the moon. She was in deepest sleep!

"As I turned again to call to Stanton, my eyes swept the head of the steps and stopped, fascinated. For the moonlight had thickened more. It seemed to be—curdled—there; and through it ran little gleams and veins of shimmering white fire. A languor passed through me. It was not the ineffable drowsiness of the preceding night. It was a sapping of all will to move. I tore my eyes away and forced them upon Stanton. I tried to call out to him. I had not the will to make my lips move! I had struggled against this paralysis and as I did so I felt through me a sharp shock. It was like a blow. And with it came utter inability to make a single motion. Goodwin, I could not even move my eyes!

"I saw Stanton leap upon the steps and move toward the gateway. As he did so the light in the courtyard grew dazzlingly brilliant. Through it rained tiny tinklings that set the heart to racing with pure joy and stilled it with terror.

"And now for the first time I heard that cry '*Av-o-lo-ha! Av-o-lo-ha!*' the cry you heard on deck. It murmured with the strange effect of a sound only partly in our own space—as though it were part of a fuller phrase passing through from another dimension and losing much as it came; infinitely caressing, infinitely cruel!

"On Stanton's face I saw come the look I dreaded—and yet knew would

appear; that mingled expression of delight and fear. The two lay side by side as they had on Thora, but were intensified. He walked on up the stairs; disappeared beyond the range of my fixed gaze. Again I heard the murmur—'*Av-o-lo-ha!*' There was triumph in it now and triumph in the storm of tinklings that swept over it.

"For another heart-beat there was silence. Then a louder burst of sound and ringing through it Stanton's voice from the courtyard—a great cry—a scream—filled with ecstasy insupportable and horror unimaginable! And again there was silence. I strove to burst the invisible bonds that held me. I could not. Even my eyelids were fixed. Within them my eyes, dry and aching, burned.

"Then, Goodwin—I first saw the inexplicable! The crystalline music swelled. Where I sat I could take in the gateway and its basalt portals, rough and broken, rising to the top of the wall forty feet above, shattered, ruined portals—unclimbable. From this gateway an intenser light began to flow. It grew, it gushed, and into it, into my sight, walked Stanton.

"Stanton! But—Goodwin! What a vision!" He ceased. I waited—waited.

## 6. INTO THE MOON POOL

"GOODWIN," Throckmartin said at last, "I can describe him only as a thing of living light. He radiated light; was filled with light; overflowed with it. Around him was a shining cloud that whirled through and around him in radiant swirls, shimmering tentacles, luminescent, coruscating spirals.

"I saw his face. It shone with a rapture too great to be borne by living men, and was shadowed with insuperable misery. It was as though his face had been remolded by the hand of God and the hand of Satan, working together and in harmony. You have seen it on my face. But you have never seen it in the degree that Stanton bore it. The eyes were wide open and fixed, as though upon some inward vision of hell and heaven! He walked like the corpse of a man damned who carried within him an angel of light.

"The music swelled again. I heard again the murmuring—'*Av-o-lo-ha!*' Stanton turned, facing the ragged side of the portal. And then I saw that the light that filled and surrounded him had a nucleus, a core—something shiftingly human shaped—that dissolved and changed, gathered itself, whirled through and beyond him and back again. And as this shining nucleus passed through him Stanton's whole body pulsed with light. As the luminescence moved, there moved with it, still and serene always, seven tiny globes of light like seven little moons.



"So much I saw and then swiftly Stanton seemed to be lifted—levitated—up the unscalable wall and to its top. The glow faded from the moonlight, the tinkling music grew fainter. I tried again to move. The spell still held me fast. The tears were running down now from my rigid lids and brought relief to my tortured eyes.

"I have said my gaze was fixed. It was. But from the side, peripherally, it took in a part of the far wall of the outer enclosure. Ages seemed to pass and I saw a radiance stealing along it. Soon there came into sight the figure that was Stanton. Far away he was—on the gigantic wall. But still I could see the shining spirals whirling jubilantly around and through him; felt rather than saw his tranced face beneath the seven lights. A swirl of crystal notes, and he had passed. And all the time, as though from some opened well of light, the courtyard gleamed and sent out silver fires that dimmed the moon-rays, yet seemed strangely to be a part of them.

"Ten times he passed before me so. The luminescence came with the music; swam for a while along the man-made cliff of basalt and passed away. Between times eternities rolled and still I crouched there, a helpless thing of stone with eyes that would not close!

"At last the moon neared the horizon. There came a louder burst of sound; the second, and last, cry of Stanton, like an echo of the first! Again the soft sigh from the inner terrace. Then—utter silence. The light faded; the moon was setting and with a rush life and power to move returned to me, I made a leap for the steps, rushed up them, through the gateway and straight to the gray rock. It was closed—as I knew it would be. But did I dream it or did I hear, echoing through it as though from vast distances a triumphant shouting—*'Av-o-lo-ha! Av-o-lo-ha!'*?

"I remembered Edith. I ran back to her. At my touch she wakened; looked at me wonderingly; raised herself on a hand.

"'Dave!' she said, 'I slept—after all.' She saw the despair on my face and leaped to her feet. 'Dave!' she cried. 'What is it? Where's Charles?'

"I lighted a fire before I spoke. Then I told her. And for the balance of that night we sat before the flames, arms around each other—like two frightened children."

Suddenly Throckmartin held his hands out to me appealingly.

"Goodwin, old friend!" he cried. "Don't look at me as though I were mad. It's truth, absolute truth. Wait—" I comforted him as well as I could. After a little time he took up his story.

"Never," he said, "did man welcome the sun as we did that morning. As soon as it was light we went back to the courtyard. The basalt walls whereon I had seen Stanton were black and silent. The terraces were as they had been. The gray slab was in its place. In the shallow hollow at its base was—nothing. Nothing—nothing was there anywhere on the

islet of Stanton—not a trace, not a sign on Nan-Tanach to show that he had ever lived.

"What were we to do? Precisely the same arguments that had kept us there the night before held good now—and doubly good. We could not abandon these two; could not go as long as there was the faintest hope of finding them—and yet for love of each other how could we remain? I loved my wife, Goodwin—how much T never knew until that day; and she loved me as deeply.

" 'It takes only one each night,' she said. 'Beloved, let it take me.'

"I wept, Goodwin. We both wept.

" 'We will meet it together,' she said. And it was thus at last that we arranged it."

"That took great courage indeed, Throckmartin," I interrupted. He looked at me eagerly.

"You do believe then?" he exclaimed.

"I believe," I said. He pressed my hand with a grip that nearly crushed it.

"Now," he told me, "I do not fear. If I—fail, you will prepare and carry on the work."

I promised. And—Heaven forgive me—that was three years ago.

"It did take courage," he went on, again quietly. "More than courage. For we knew it was renunciation. Each of us in our hearts felt that one of us would not be there to see the sun rise. And each of us prayed that the death, if death it was, would not come first to the other.

"We talked it all over carefully, bringing to bear all our power of analysis and habit of calm, scientific thought. We considered minutely the time element in the phenomena. Although the deep chanting began at the very moment of moonrise, fully five minutes had passed between its full lifting and the strange sighing sound from the inner terrace. I went back in memory over the happenings of the night before. At least fifteen minutes had intervened between the first heralding sigh and the intensification of the moonlight in the courtyard. And this glow grew for at least ten minutes more before the first burst of the crystal notes.

"The sighing sound—of what had it reminded me? Of course—of a door revolving and swishing softly along its base.

" 'Edith!' I cried. T think I have it! The gray rock opens five minutes after upon the moonrise. But whoever or whatever it is that comes through it must wait until the moon has risen higher, or else it must come from a distance. The thing to do is not to wait for it, but to surprise it before it passes out the door. We will go into the inner court early. You will take your rifle and pistol and hide yourself where you can command the

opening—if the slab does open. The instant it moves I will enter. It's our best chance, Edith. I think it's our only one.'

"My wife demurred strongly. She wanted to go with me. But I convinced her that it was better for her to stand guard without, prepared to help me if I were forced from what lay behind the rock again into the open.

"The day passed too swiftly. In the face of what we feared our love seemed stronger than ever. Was it the flare of the spark before extinguishment? I wondered. We prepared and ate a good dinner. We tried to keep our minds from anything but scientific aspect of the phenomena. We agreed that whatever it was its cause must be human, and that we must keep that fact in mind every second. But what kind of men could create such prodigies? We thrilled at the thought of finding perhaps the remnants of a vanished race, living perhaps in cities over whose rocky skies the Pacific rolled; exercising there the lost wisdom of the half-gods of earth's youth.

"At the half-hour before moonrise we two went into the inner courtyard. I took my place at the side of the gray rock. Edith crouched behind a broken pillar twenty feet away, slipped her rifle-barrel over it so that it would cover the opening.

"The minutes crept by. The courtyard was very quiet. The darkness lessened and through the breaches of the terrace I watched the far sky softly lighten. With the first pale flush the stillness became intensified. It deepened—became unbearably—expectant. The moon rose, showed the quarter, the half, then swam up into full sight like a great bubble.

"Its rays fell upon the wall before me and suddenly upon the convexities I have described seven little circles of light sprang out. They gleamed, glimmered, grew brighter—shone. The gigantic slab before me turned as though on a pivot, sighing softly as it moved.

"For a moment I gasped in amazement. It was like a conjurer's trick. And the moving slab I noticed was also glowing, becoming opalescent like the little shining circles above.

"Only for a second I gazed and then with a word to Edith flung myself through the opening which the slab had uncovered. Before me was a platform and from the platform steps led downward into a smooth corridor. This passage was not dark, it glowed with the same faint silvery radiance as the door. Down it I raced. As I ran, plainer than ever before, I heard the chanting. The passage turned abruptly, passed parallel to the walls of the outer courtyard and then once more led abruptly downward. Still I ran, and as I ran I looked at the watch on my wrist. Less than three minutes had elapsed.

"The passage ended. Before me was a high vaulted arch. For a moment I paused. It seemed to open into space; a space filled with lambent, coruscating, many-colored mist whose brightness grew even as I watched. I passed through the arch and stopped in sheer awe!

"In front of me was a pool. It was circular, perhaps twenty feet wide. Around it ran a low, softly curved lip of glimmering silvery stone. Its water was palest blue. The pool with its silvery rim was like a great blue eye staring upward.

"Upon it streamed seven shafts of radiance. They poured down upon the blue eye like cylindrical torrents; they were like shining pillars of light rising from a sapphire floor.

"One was the tender pink of the pearl; one of the aurora's green; a third a deathly white; the fourth the blue in mother-of-pearl; a shimmering column of pale amber; a beam of amethyst; a shaft of molten silver. Such are the colors of the seven lights that stream upon the moon pool. I drew closer, awestricken. The shafts did not illumine the depths. They played upon the surface and seemed there to diffuse, to melt into it. The pool drank them!

"Through the water tiny gleams of phosphorescence began to dart, sparkles and coruscations of pale incandescence. And far, far below I sensed a movement, a shifting glow as of something slowly rising.

"I looked upward, following the radiant pillars to their source. Far above were seven shining globes, and it was from these that the rays poured. Even as I watched their brightness grew. They were like seven moons set high in some caverned heaven. Slowly their splendor increased, and with it the splendor of the seven beams streaming from them. It came to me that they were crystals of some unknown kind set in the roof of the moon pool's vault and that their light was drawn from the moon shining high above them. They were wonderful, those lights—and what must have been the knowledge of those who set them there!

"Brighter and brighter they grew as the moon climbed higher, sending its full radiance down through them. I tore my gaze away and stared at the pool. It had grown milky, opalescent. The rays gushing into it seemed to be filling it; it was alive with sparklings, scintillations, glimmerings. And the luminescence I had seen rising from its depths was larger, nearer!

"A swirl of mist floated up from its surface. It drifted within the embrace of the rosy beam and hung there for a moment. The beam seemed to embrace it, sending through it little shining corpuscles, tiny rosy spiralings. The mist absorbed the rays, was strengthened by it, gained substance. Another swirl sprang into the amber shaft, clung and fed there, moved swiftly toward the first and mingled with it. And now other swirls arose,

here and there, too fast to be counted, hung poised in the embrace of the light streams; flashed and pulsed into each other.

"Thicker and thicker still they arose until the surface of the pool was a pulsating pillar of opalescent mist; steadily growing stronger; drawing within it life from the seven beams falling upon it; drawing to it from below the darting, red atoms of the pool. Into its center was passing the luminescence I had sensed rising from the far depths. And the center glowed, throbbed—began to send out questing swirls and tendrils.

"There forming before me was *that* which had walked with Stanton, which had taken Thora—the thing I had come to find!

"With the shock or realization my brain sprang into action. My hand fell to my pistol and I fired shot after shot into its radiance. The place rang with the explosions and there came to me a sense of unforgivable profanation. Devilish as T knew it to be, that chamber of the moon pool seemed also—in some way—holy. As though a god and a demon dwelt there, inextricably commingled.

"As I shot the pillar wavered; the water grew more disturbed. The mist swayed and shook; gathered itself again. I slipped a second clip into the automatic and, another idea coming to me, took careful aim at one of the globes in the roof. From thence I knew came the force that shaped the dweller in the pool. From the pouring rays came its strength. If I could destroy them I could check its forming. I fired again and again. If I hit the globes I did no damage. The little motes in their beams danced with the motes in the mist, troubled. That was all.

"Up from the pool like little bells, like bubbles of crystal notes rose the tinklings. Their notes were higher, had lost their sweetness, were angry, as it were, with themselves.

"And then out from the inexplicable, hovering over the pool, swept a shining swirl. It caught me above the heart; wrapped itself around me. I felt an icy coldness and then there rushed over me a mingled ecstasy and horror. Every atom of me quivered with delight and at the same time shrank with despair. There was nothing loathsome in it. But it was as though the icy soul of evil and the fiery soul of good had stepped together within me. The pistol dropped from my hand.

"So I stood while the pool gleamed and sparkled; the streams of light grew more intense and the mist glowed and strengthened. I saw that its shining core had shape—but a shape that my eyes and brain could not define. It was as though a being of another sphere should assume what it might of human semblance, but was not able to conceal that what human eyes saw was but a part of it. It was neither man nor woman; it was unearthly and androgynous. Even as I found its human semblance it changed. And still the mingled rapture and terror held me. Only in a

little corner of my brain dwelt something untouched; something that held itself apart and watched. Was it the soul? I have never believed—and yet—

"Over the head of the misty body there sprang suddenly out seven little lights. Each was the color of the beam beneath which it rested. T knew now that the dweller was—complete!

"And then—behind me I heard a scream. It was Edith's voice. It came to me that she had heard the shots and followed me. I felt every faculty concentrate into a mighty effort. I wrenched myself free from the gripping tentacle and it swept back. I turned to catch Edith, and as I did so slipped—fell. As I dropped I saw the radiant shape above the pool leap swiftly for me!

"There was the rush past me and as the dweller paused, straight into it raced Edith, arms outstretched to shield me from it!"

He trembled.

"She threw herself squarely within its diabolic splendor," he whispered. "She stopped and reeled as though she had encountered solidity. And as she faltered it wrapped its shining self around her. The crystal tinklings burst forth jubilantly. The light filled her, ran through and around her as it had with Stanton, and I saw drop upon her face—the look. From the pillar came the murmur—'*Av-o-lo-ha!*' The vault echoed it.

"'Edith!' I cried. 'Edith!' I was in agony. She must have heard me, even through the—thing. I saw her try to free herself. Her rush had taken her to the very verge of the moon pool. She tottered; and in an instant—she fell—with the radiance still holding her, still swirling and winding around and through her—into the moon pool! She sank, Goodwin, and with her went—the dweller!

"I dragged myself to the brink. Far down I saw a shining, many-colored nebulous cloud descending; caught a glimpse of Edith's face, disappearing; her eyes stared up to me filled with supernal ecstasy and horror. And—vanished!

"I looked about me stupidly. The seven globes still poured their radiance upon the pool. It was pale-blue again. Its sparklings and coruscations were gone. From far below there came a muffled outburst of triumphant chanting!

"'Edith!' I cried again. 'Edith, come back to me!' And then a darkness fell upon me. I remember running back through the shimmering corridors and out into the courtyard. Reason had left me. When it returned I was far out at sea in our boat wholly estranged from civilization. A day later I was picked up by the schooner in which I came to Port Moresby.

"I have formed a plan; you must hear it, Goodwin—" He fell upon

his berth. I bent over him. Exhaustion and the relief of telling his story had been too much for him. He slept like the dead.

## 7. THE DWELLER COMES

ALL THAT NIGHT I watched over him. When dawn broke I went to my room to get a little sleep myself. But my slumber was haunted.

The next day the storm was unabated. Throckmartin came to me at lunch. He looked better. His strange expression had waned. He had regained much of his old alertness.

"Come to my cabin," he said. There, he stripped his shirt from him. "Something is happening," he said. "The mark is smaller." It was as he said.

"I'm escaping," he whispered jubilantly. "Just let me get to Melbourne safely, and then we'll see who'll win! For, Goodwin, I'm not at all sure that Edith is dead—as we know death—nor that the others are. There was something outside experience there—some great mystery."

And all that day he talked to me of his plans.

"There's a natural explanation, of course," he said. "My theory is that the moon rock is of some composition sensitive to the action of moon rays; somewhat as the metal selenium is to sun rays. There is a powerful quality in moonlight, as both science and legends can attest. We know of its effect upon the mentality, the nervous system, even upon certain diseases.

"The moon slab is of some material that reacts to moonlight. The circles over the top are, without doubt, its operating agency. When the light strikes them they release the mechanism that opens the slab, just as you can open doors with sunlight by an ingenious arrangement of selenium-cells. Apparently it takes the strength of the full moon to do this. We will first try a concentration of the rays of the *nearly* full moon upon these circles to see whether that will open the rock. If it does we will be able to investigate the pool without interruption from—from—what emanates.

"Look, here on the chart are their locations. I have made this in duplicate for you in the event of something happening to me."

He worked upon the chart a little more.

"Here," he said, "is where I believe the seven great globes to be. They are probably hidden somewhere in the ruins of the islet called Tau, where they can catch the first moon rays. I have calculated that when I entered I went so far this way—here is the turn; so far this way, took this other turn and ran down this long, curving corridor to the hall of the

moon pool. That ought to make lights, at least approximately, here." He pointed.

"They are certainly cleverly concealed, but they must be open to the air to get the light. They should not be too hard to find. They must be found." He hesitated again. "I suppose it would be safer to destroy them, for it is clearly through them that the phenomenon of the pool is manifested; and yet, to destroy so wonderful a thing! Perhaps the better way would be to have some men up by them, and if it were necessary, to protect those below, to destroy them on signal. Or they might simply be covered. That would neutralize them. To destroy them—" He hesitated again. "No, the phenomenon is too important to be destroyed without fullest investigation." His face clouded again. "But it is *not* human; it can't be," he muttered. He turned to me and laughed. "The old conflict between science and too frail human credulity!" he said.

Again—"We need half a dozen diving-suits. The pool must be entered and searched to its depths. That will indeed take courage, yet in the time of the new moon it should be safe, or perhaps better after the dweller is destroyed or made safe."

We went over plans, accepted them, rejected them, and still the storm raged—and all that day and all that night.

I hurry to the end. That afternoon there came a steady lightening of the clouds which Throckmartin watched with deep uneasiness. Toward dusk they broke away suddenly and soon the sky was clear. The stars came twinkling out.

"It will be tonight," Throckmartin said to me. "Goodwin, friend, stand by me. Tonight it will come, and I must fight."

I could say nothing. About an hour before moonrise we went to his cabin. We fastened the port-holes tightly and turned on the lights. Throckmartin had some queer theory that the electric rays would be a bar to his pursuer. I don't know why. A little later he complained of increasing sleepiness.

"But it's just weariness," he said. "Not at all like that other drowsiness. It's an hour till moonrise still," he yawned at last. "Wake me up a good fifteen minutes before."

He lay upon the berth. I sat thinking. I came to myself with a start. What time was it? I looked at my watch and jumped to the port-hole. It was full moonlight; the orb had been up for fully half an hour. I strode over to Throckmartin and shook him by the shoulder.

"Up, quick, man!" I cried. He rose sleepily. His shirt fell open at the neck and I looked, in amazement, at the white band around his chest. Even under the electric light it shone softly, as though little flecks of light were in it.



Throckmartin seemed only half-awake. He looked down at his breast, saw the glowing cincture, and smiled.

"Oh, yes," he said drowsily, "it's coming—to take me back to Edith! Well, I'm glad."

"Throckmartin!" I cried. "Wake up! Fight."

"Fight!" he said. "No use; keep the maps; come after us."

He went to the port and drowsily drew aside the curtain. The moon traced a broad path of light straight to the ship. Under its rays the band around his chest gleamed brighter and brighter; shot forth little rays; seemed to move.

He peered out intently and, suddenly, before I could stop him, threw open the port. I saw a glimmering presence moving swiftly along the moon path toward us, skimming over the waters.

And with it raced little crystal tinklings and far off I heard a long-drawn murmuring cry.

On the instant the lights went out in the cabin, evidently throughout the ship, for I heard shouting above. I sprang back into a corner and crouched there. At the port-hole was a radiance; swirls and spirals of living white cold fire. It poured into the cabin and it was filled with dancing motes of light, and over the radiant core of it shone seven little lights like tiny moons. It gathered Throckmartin to it. Light pulsed through and from him. I saw his skin turn to a translucent, shimmering whiteness like illumined porcelain. His face became unrecognizable, inhuman with the monstrous twin expressions. So he stood for a moment. The pillar of light seemed to hesitate and the seven lights to contemplate me. I shrank further down into the corner. I saw Throckmartin drawn to the port. The room filled with murmuring. I fainted.

When I awakened the lights were burning again.

But of Throckmartin there was no trace!

There are some things that we are bound to regret all our lives. I suppose I was unbalanced by what I had seen. I could not think clearly. But there came to me the sheer impossibility of telling the ship's officers what I had seen; what Throckmartin had told me. They would accuse me, I felt, of his murder. At neither appearance of the phenomenon had any save our two selves witnessed it. I was certain of this because they would surely have discussed it. Why none had seen it I do not know.

The next morning when Throckmartin's absence was noted, I merely said that I had left him early in the evening. It occurred to no one to doubt me, or to question me further. His strangeness had caused much comment; all had thought him half-mad. And so it was officially reported that he had fallen or jumped from the ship during the failure of the lights, the cause of which was another mystery of that night.

Afterward, the same inhibition held me back from making his and my story known to my fellow scientists.

But this inhibition is suddenly dead, and I am not sure that its death is not a summons from Throckmartin.

And now I am going to Nan-Tanach to make amends for my cowardice by seeking out the dweller. So sure am I that all I have written here is absolutely true.

March 15, 1919

# THE GIRL IN THE GOLDEN ATOM

by Ray Cummings

*The Girl in the Golden Atom* is one of the landmarks in the scientific romance and inspired a host of sequels. It inaugurated the writing career of a science-fiction author who in the nineteen-twenties was one of the great names in his field.

Raymond King Cummings was born August 30, 1887, on Times Square, New York City, when the little triangle on which the New York Times Building stood was a green park. The place of his birth was at Forty-Third Street and Broadway, and later, when Toffenetti's Restaurant was there, he used to make it a practice to dine often at a table closest to the spot where he was born.

His father and brothers were extremely well-to-do, and after spending two months at Princeton, at the age of sixteen he was removed to go to Puerto Rico, where his brothers had bought land and planted oranges, while his father was engaged in selling the groves from New York City. A special tutor was retained to expand his horizons in Puerto Rico, but he educated youthful Ray Cummings more in the joys of life in San Juan than in mathematics or literature.

The sole position he ever held was with Thomas Alva Edison, where for five years his major activities were editing house organs, writing copy for record albums, and similar endeavors. The story that he was Edison's secretary is apparently pressagency to lend scientific stature through association. He left in 1919, about the time he began to click with fiction, and remained a full-time writer the rest of his life, primarily of science fiction and detective stories.

The style of his short stories was very modern, direct, and clean, and even in his scientific romances the plot, idea, and setting conveyed the mood rather than his style.

After a pretentious beginning—including publication of *The Girl in the Golden Atom* in hardcover by Methuen, London, in 1922 and Harper &

Brothers, New York, in 1923, a distinction accorded few science-fiction writers of that time, and despite reprinting of four of his novels by McClurg in the late twenties and early thirties as a replacement for their loss of Edgar Rice Burroughs—he went into a rapid decline. He repeated his old plots with great frequency, permitted his writing to degenerate to a careless, juvenile level, and lost almost entirely his once substantial following.

His wife, Gabrielle Wilson, sold fiction under the name of Gabriel Wilson, usually in collaboration with her husband. Apple of his eye was daughter Elizabeth Starr, who sold a short story to LIBERTY at the age of thirteen and received a letter of appreciation from Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. At one time the two occupied a suite of rooms in a New York hotel and wrote from twelve midnight to dawn every day, arising for breakfast at noon. Cummings died January 23, 1957, at Mount Vernon, New York, aged sixty-nine. Throughout his life his favorite story remained his first, *The Girl in the Golden Atom*.

The title, *The Girl in the Golden Atom*, has become synonymous with the once-popular science fiction plot in which the atoms that compose matter are tiny suns and planets, which in turn are possibly the home systems of minute civilizations. Ray Cummings, indulging in variations on the theme for several decades, divested it of all novelty, and the advance of scientific knowledge further divested it of all probability. Yet, rereading *The Girl in the Golden Atom*, the original enthusiasm of the author infuses the reader with a feeling of high wonder and delightful novelty, sustaining it as an excellent example of the scientific romances that flourished in the pulp magazines for thirty years.

## 1. A UNIVERSE IN AN ATOM

"THEN YOU MEAN to say there is no such thing as the *smallest* particle of matter?" asked the Doctor.

"You can put it that way if you like," the Chemist replied. "In other words, what I believe is that things can be infinitely small just as well as they can be infinitely large. Astronomers tell us of the immensity of space. I have tried to imagine space as finite. It is impossible. How can you conceive the edge of space? Something must be beyond—something or nothing, and even that would be more space, wouldn't it?"

"Gosh," said the Very Young Man, and lighted another cigarette.

The Chemist resumed, smiling a little. "Now, if it seems probable that there is no limit to the immensity of space, why should we make its smallness finite? How can you say that the atom cannot be divided? As a matter of fact, it already has been. The most powerful microscope will show you realms of smallness to which you can penetrate no other way. Mul-

tively that power a thousand times, or ten thousand times, and who shall say what you will see?"

The Chemist paused, and looked at the intent little group around him.

He was a youngish man, with large features and horn-rimmed glasses, his rough English-cut clothes hanging loosely over his broad, spare frame. The Banker drained his glass and rang for the waiter.

"Very interesting," he remarked.

"Don't be an ass, George," said the Big Business Man. "Just because you don't understand, doesn't mean there is no sense to it."

"What I don't get clearly—" began the Doctor.

"None of it's clear to me," said the Very Young Man.

The Doctor crossed under the light and took an easier chair. "You intimated you had discovered something unusual in these realms of the infinitely small," he suggested, sinking back luxuriously. "Will you tell us about it?"

"Yes, if you like," said the Chemist, turning from one to the other. A nod of assent followed his glance, as each settled himself more comfortably.

"Well, gentlemen, when you say I have discovered something unusual in another world—in the world of the infinitely small—you are right in a way. I have seen something and lost it. You won't believe me, probably." He glanced at the Banker an instant. "But that is not important. I am going to tell you the facts, just as they happened."

The Big Business Man filled up the glasses all around, and the Chemist resumed:

"It was in nineteen ten that this problem first came to interest me. I had never gone in for microscopic work very much, but now I let it absorb all my attention. I secured larger, more powerful instruments—I spent most of my money"—he smiled ruefully—"but never could I come to the end of the space into which I was looking. Something was always hidden beyond—something I could almost, but not quite, distinguish.

"Then I realized that I was on the wrong track. My instrument was not merely of insufficient power, it was not one thousandth the power I needed.

"So I began to study the laws of optics and lenses. In nineteen thirteen I went abroad, and with one of the most famous lens-makers of Europe I produced a lens of an entirely different quality, a lens that I hoped would give me what I wanted. So I returned here and fitted up my microscope that I knew would prove vastly more powerful than any yet constructed.

"It was finally completed and set up in my laboratory, and one night I went in alone to look through it for the first time. It was in the fall of nineteen fourteen, I remember.

"I can recall now my feelings at that moment. I was about to see into another world, to behold what no man had ever looked on before. What

would I see? What new realms was I, first of all our human race, to enter? With furiously beating heart, I sat down before the huge instrument and carefully adjusted the eyepiece.

"Then I glanced around for some object to examine. On my finger I had a ring, my mother's wedding ring, and I decided to use that. I have it here." He took a plain gold band from his little finger and laid it on the table.

"You will see a slight mark on the outside. That is the place into which I looked."

His friends crowded around the table and examined a scratch on one side of the band.

"What did you see?" asked the Very Young Man eagerly.

"Gentlemen," resumed the Chemist, "what I saw staggered even my own imagination. With trembling hands I put the ring in place, looking directly down into that scratch. For a moment I saw nothing. I was like a person coming suddenly out of the sunlight into a darkened room. I knew there was something visible in my view, but my eyes did not seem able to receive the impressions. I realize now they were not yet adjusted to the new form of light. Gradually, as I looked, objects of definite shape began to emerge from the blackness.

"Gentlemen, I want to make clear to you now—as clear as I can—the peculiar aspect of everything that I saw under this microscope. I seemed to be inside an immense cave. One side, near at hand, I could now make out quite clearly. The walls were extraordinarily rough and indented, with a peculiar phosphorescent light on the projections and blackness in the hollows. I say phosphorescent light, for that is the nearest word I can find to describe it—a curious radiation, quite different from the reflected light to which we are accustomed.

"I said that the hollows inside of the cave were blackness. But not blackness—the absence of light—as we know it. It was a blackness that seemed also to radiate light, if you can imagine such a condition; a blackness that seemed not empty, but merely withholding its contents just beyond my vision.

"Except for a dim suggestion of roof over the cave, and its floor, I could distinguish nothing. After a moment this floor became clearer. It seemed to be—well, perhaps I might call it black marble—smooth, glossy, yet somewhat translucent. In the foreground the floor was apparently liquid. In no way did it differ in appearance from the solid part, except that its surface seemed to be in motion.

"Another curious thing was the outlines of all the shapes in view. I noticed that no outline held steady when I looked at it directly; it seemed

to quiver. You see something like it when looking at an object through water—only, of course, there was no distortion. It was also like looking at something with the radiation of heat between.

"Of the back and other side of the cave, I could see nothing, except in one place, where a narrow effulgence of light drifted out into the immensity of the distance behind.

"I do not know how long I sat looking at this scene; it may have been several hours. Although I was obviously in a cave, I never felt shut in—never got the impression of being in a narrow, confined space.

"On the contrary, after a time I seemed to feel the vast immensity of the blackness before me. I think perhaps it may have been that path of light stretching out into the distance. As I looked, it seemed like the reversed tail of a comet, or the dim glow of the Milky Way, and penetrating to equally remote realms of space.

"Perhaps I fell asleep, or at least there was an interval of time during which I was so absorbed in my own thoughts I was hardly conscious of the scene before me.

"Then I became aware of a dim shape in the foreground—a shape merged with the outlines surrounding it. And as I looked, it gradually assumed form, and I saw it was the figure of a young girl, sitting beside the liquid pool. Except for the same waviness of outline and phosphorescent glow, she had quite the normal aspect of a human being of our own world. She was beautiful, according to our own standards of beauty; her long braided hair a glowing black, her face, delicate of feature and winsome in expression. Her lips were a deep red, although I felt rather than saw the color.

"She was dressed only in a short tunic of a substance I might describe as gray opaque glass, and the pearly whiteness of her skin gleamed with iridescence.

"She seemed to be singing, although I heard no sound. Once she bent over the pool and plunged her hand into it, laughing gaily.

"Gentlemen, I cannot make you appreciate my emotions, when all at once I remembered I was looking through a microscope. I had forgotten entirely my situation, absorbed in the scene before me. And then, all at once, a great realization came upon me—the realization that everything I saw was inside that ring. I was unnerved for the moment at the importance of my discovery.

"When I looked again, after the few moments my eye took to become accustomed to the new form of light, the scene showed itself as before, except that the girl had gone.

"For over a week, each night at the same time I watched that cave. The girl came always, and sat by the pool as I had first seen her. Once she

danced with the wild grace of a wood nymph, whirling in and out the shadows, and falling at last in a little heap beside the pool.

"It was on the tenth night after I had first seen her that the accident happened. I had been watching, I remember, an unusually long time before she appeared, gliding out of the shadows. She seemed in a different mood, pensive and sad, as she bent down over the pool, staring into it intently. Suddenly there was a tremendous cracking sound, sharp as an explosion, and I was thrown backward upon the floor."

"When I recovered consciousness—I must have struck my head on something—I found the microscope in ruins. Upon examination I saw that its larger lens had exploded—flown into fragments scattered around the room. Why I was not killed I do not understand. The ring I picked up from the floor; it was unharmed and unchanged in any way.

"Can I make you understand how I felt at this loss? Because of the war in Europe I knew I could never replace my lens—for many years, at any rate. And then, gentlemen, came the most terrible feeling of all; I knew at last that the scientific achievement I had made and lost counted for little with me. It was the girl. I realized then that the only being I ever could care for was living out her life with her world, and, indeed, her whole universe, inside an atom of that ring."

The Chemist stopped talking and looked from one to the other of the tense faces of his companions.

"It's almost too big an idea to grasp," murmured the Doctor.

"What caused the explosion?" asked the Very Young Man.

"I do not know." The Chemist addressed his reply to the Doctor, as the most understanding of the group. "I can appreciate, though, that through that lens I was magnifying tremendously those peculiar light-radiations that I have described. I believe the molecules of the lens were shattered by them—I had exposed it longer to them that evening than any of the others."

The Doctor nodded his comprehension of this theory.

Impressed in spite of himself, the Banker took another drink and leaned forward in his chair. "Then you really think that there is a girl now inside the gold of that ring?" he asked.

"He didn't say that necessarily," interrupted the Big Business Man.

"Yes, he did."

"As a matter of fact, I do believe that to be the case," said the Chemist earnestly. "I believe that every particle of matter in our universe contains within it an equally complex and complete a universe, which to its inhabitants seems as large as ours. I think, also, that the whole realm



of our interplanetary space, our solar system and all the remote stars of the heavens are contained within the atom of some other universe as gigantic to us as we are to the universe in that ring."

"Gosh!" said the Very Young Man.

"It doesn't make one feel very important in the scheme of things, does it?" remarked the Big Business Man dryly.

The Chemist smiled. "The existence of no individual, no nation, no world, nor any one universe is of the least importance."

"Then it would be possible," said the Doctor, "for this gigantic universe that contains us in one of its atoms, to be itself contained within the atom of another universe, still more gigantic than it is, and so on."

"That is my own theory," said the Chemist.

"And in each of the atoms of the rocks of that cave there may be other worlds proportionately minute?"

"I can see no reason to doubt it."

"Well, there is no proof, anyway," said the Banker. "We might as well believe it."

"I intend to get the proof," said the Chemist.

"Do you believe all these innumerable universes, both larger and smaller than ours, are inhabited?" the Doctor asked him.

"I should think probably most of them are. The existence of life, I believe, is as fundamental as the existence of matter without life."

"How do you suppose that girl got in there?" asked the Very Young Man, coming out of a brown study.

"What puzzled me," resumed the Chemist, ignoring the question, "is why the girl should so resemble our own race. I have thought about it a good deal, and I have reached the conclusion that the inhabitants of any universe in the next smaller or larger plane to ours probably resemble us fairly closely. That ring, you see, is in the same—shall we say—environment as ourselves. The same forces control it that control us. Now, if the ring had been created on Mars, for instance, I believe that the universes within its atoms would be inhabited by beings like the Martians—if Mars has any inhabitants. Of course, in planes beyond those next to ours, either smaller or larger, changes would probably occur, becoming greater as you go in or out from our own universe."

"Good Lord! It makes one dizzy to think of it," said the Big Business Man excitedly.

"I wish I knew how that girl got in there," sighed the Very Young Man, looking at the ring.

"She probably didn't," retorted the Doctor. "Very likely she was created there, the same as you were here."

"I think that is probably so," said the Chemist. "And yet, sometimes I am not at all sure. She was very human." The Very Young Man looked at him sympathetically.

"How are you going to prove your theories?" asked the Banker, in his most irritatingly practical way.

The Chemist picked up the ring and put it on his finger. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have tried to tell you facts, not theories. What T saw through that ultramicroscope was not an unproven theory, but a fact. My theories you have brought out by your questions."

"You are quite right," said the Doctor, "but you did mention yourself that you hoped to provide proof."

The Chemist hesitated a moment, then made his decision. "I will tell you the rest," he said.

"After the destruction of the microscope, T was quite at a loss how to proceed. I thought about the problem for many weeks. Finally I decided to work along another altogether different line—a theory about which I am surprised you have not already questioned me."

He paused, but no one spoke.

"I am hardly ready with proof tonight," he resumed after a moment. "Will you all take dinner with me here at the club one week from to-night?" He read affirmation in the glance of each.

"Good. That's settled," he said rising. "At seven, then."

"But what was the theory you expected us to question you about?" asked the Very Young Man.

The Chemist leaned on the back of his chair.

"The only solution I could see to the problem," he said slowly, "was to find some way of making myself sufficiently small to be able to enter that other universe. I have found such a way, and one week from to-night, gentlemen, with your assistance, I am going to enter the surface of that ring at the point where it is scratched!"

## 2. INTO THE RING

THE CIGARS WERE lighted and dinner over before the Doctor broached the subject uppermost in the minds of every member of the party.

"A toast, gentlemen," he said, raising his glass. "To the greatest research Chemist in the world. May he be successful in his adventure to-night."

The Chemist bowed his acknowledgement.

"You have not heard me yet," he said smiling.

"But we want to," said the Very Young Man impulsively.

"And you shall." He settled himself more comfortably in his chair.

"Gentlemen, I am going to tell you, first, as simply as possible, just what I have done in the past two years. You must draw your own conclusions from the evidence I give you.

"You will remember that I told you last week of my dilemma after the destruction of the microscope. Its loss and the impossibility of replacing it, led me into still bolder plans than merely the visual examination of this minute world. I reasoned, as I have told you, that because of its physical proximity, its similar environment, so to speak, this outer world should be capable of supporting life identical with our own.

"By no process of reasoning can I find adequate refutation of this theory. Then, again, I had the evidence of my own eyes to prove that a being I could not tell from one of my own kind was living there. That this girl, other than in size, differs radically from those of our race, I cannot believe.

"I saw then but one obstacle standing between me and this other world—the discrepancy of size. The distance separating our world from this other, is infinitely great or infinitely small, according to the viewpoint. In my present size it is only a few feet from here to the ring on that plate. But to an inhabitant of that other world, we are as remote as the faintest stars of the heavens, diminished a thousand times."

He paused a moment, signing the waiter to leave the room.

"This reduction of bodily size, great as it is, involves no deeper principle than does a light contraction of tissue, except that it must be carried further. The problem, then, was to find a chemical, sufficiently unharmed to life, that would so act upon the body cells as to cause a reduction in bulk, without changing their shape. I had to secure a uniform and also a proportionate rate of contraction of each cell, in order not to have the body shape altered.

"After a comparatively small amount of research work, I encountered an apparently insurmountable obstacle. As you know, gentlemen, our living human bodies are held together by the power of the central intelligence we call the mind. Every instant during your lifetime your subconscious mind is commanding and directing the individual life of each cell that makes up your body. At death this power is withdrawn; each cell is thrown under its own individual command, and dissolution of the body takes place.

"I found, therefore, that I could not act upon the cells separately, so long as they were under control of the mind. On the other hand, I could not withdraw this power of the subconscious mind without causing death.

"I progressed no further than this for several months. Then came the solution. I reasoned that after death the body does not immediately disintegrate; far more time elapses than I expected to need for the cell-contraction. I devoted my time, then, to find a chemical that would tem-

porarily withhold, during the period of cell-contraction, the power of the subconscious mind, just as the power of the conscious mind is withheld by hypnotism."

"I am not going to weary you by trying to lead you through the maze of chemical experiments into which I plunged. Only one of you"—he indicated the Doctor—"has the technical bases of knowledge to follow me. No one had been before me along the path I traversed. I pursued the method of pure theoretical deduction, drawing my conclusions from the practical results obtained.

"I worked on rabbits almost exclusively. After a few weeks T succeeded in completely suspending animation in one of them for several hours. There was no life apparently existing during that period. It was not a trance or coma, but the complete simulation of death. No harmful results followed the revivifying of the animal. The contraction of the cells was far more difficult to accomplish; I finished my last experiment less than six months ago."

"Then you really have been able to make an animal infinitely small?" asked the Big Business Man.

The Chemist smiled. "I sent four rabbits into the unknown last week," he said.

"What did they look like going?" asked the Very Young Man. The Chemist signed him to be patient.

"The quantity of diminution to be obtained bothered me considerably. Exactly how small that other universe is, I had no means of knowing, except by the computations I made of the magnifying power of my lens. These figures, I know, must necessarily be very inaccurate. Then, again, I have no means of judging by the visual rate of diminution of these rabbits, whether this contraction is at a uniform rate or accelerated. Nor can I tell how long it is prolonged, or the quantity of drug administered, as only a fraction of the diminution has taken place when the animal passes beyond the range of any microscope I now possess.

"These questions were overshadowed, however, by a far more serious problem that encompassed them all.

"As I was planning to project myself into this unknown universe and to reach the exact size proportionate to it, I soon realized such a result could not be obtained were I in an unconscious state. Only by successive doses of the drug, or its retardant about which I will tell you later, could I hope to reach the proper size. Another necessity is that I place myself on the exact spot on that ring where I wish to enter and to climb down among its atoms when I have become sufficiently small to do so. Obviously,

this would be impossible to one not possessing all his faculties and physical strength."

"And did you solve that problem, too?" asked the Banker. "I'd like to see it done," he added, reading his answer in the other's confident smile.

The Chemist produced two small paper packages from his wallet. "These drugs are the result of my research," he said. "One of them causes contraction, and the other expansion, by an exact reversal of the process. Taken together, they produce no effect, and a lesser amount of one retards the action of the other." He opened the papers, showing two small vials. "I have made them as you see, in the form of tiny pills, each containing a minute quantity of the drug. It is by taking them successively in unequal amounts that I expect to reach the desired size."

"There's one point that you do not mention," said the Doctor. "Those vials and their contents will have to change size as you do. How are you going to manage that?"

"By experimentation I have found," answered the Chemist, "that any object held in close physical contact with the living body being contracted is contracted itself at an equal rate. I believe that my clothes will be affected also. These vials I will carry strapped under my armpits."

"Suppose you should die, or be killed, would the contraction cease?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes, almost immediately," replied the Chemist. "Apparently, though I am acting through the subconscious mind while its power is held in abeyance, when this power is permanently withdrawn by death, the drug no longer affects the individual cells. The contraction or expansion ceases almost at once."

The Chemist cleared a space before him on the table. "In a well-managed club like this," he said, "there should be no flies, but I see several around. Do you suppose we can catch one of them?"

"I can," said the Very Young Man, and forthwith he did.

The Chemist moistened a lump of sugar and laid it on the table before him. Then, selecting one of the smallest of the pills, he ground it to powder with the back of a spoon and sprinkled this powder on the sugar.

"Will you give me the fly, please?"

The Very Young Man gingerly did so. The Chemist held the insect by its wings over the sugar. "Will some one lend me one of his shoes?"

The Very Young Man hastily slipped off one of his shoes.

"Thank you," said the Chemist, placing it on the table with a quizzical smile.

The rest of the company rose from their chairs and gathered around, watching with interested faces what was about to happen.

"I hope he is hungry," remarked the Chemist, and placed the fly gently down on the sugar, still holding it by the wings. The insect, after a moment, ate a little.

Silence fell upon the group as each watched intently. For a few moments nothing happened. Then, almost imperceptibly at first, the fly became larger. In another minute it was the size of a large horse-fly, struggling to release its wings from the Chemist's grasp. A minute more and it was the size of a beetle. No one spoke. The Banker moistened his lips, drained his glass hurriedly and moved slightly farther away. Still the insect grew; now it was the size of a small chicken, the multiple lens of its eyes presenting a most terrifying aspect, while its ferocious droning reverberated through the room. Then suddenly the Chemist threw it upon the table, covered it with a napkin, and beat it violently with the shoe. When all movement had ceased he tossed its quivering body into a corner of the room.

"Good God!" ejaculated the Banker, as the white-faced men stared at each other. The quiet voice of the Chemist brought them back to themselves. "That, gentlemen, you must understand, was only a fraction of the very first stage of growth. As you may have noticed, it was constantly accelerated. This acceleration attains a speed of possibly fifty thousand times that you observed. Beyond that, it is my theory, the change is at a uniform rate." He looked at the body of the fly, lying inert on the floor. "You can appreciate now, gentlemen, the importance of having this growth cease after death."

"Good Lord, I should say so!" murmured the Big Business Man, mopping his forehead. The Chemist took the lump of sugar and threw it into the open fire.

"Gosh!" said the Very Young Man. "Suppose when we were not looking, another fly had—•"

"Shut up!" growled the Banker.

"Not so skeptical now, eh, George?" said the Big Business Man.

"Can you catch me another fly?" asked the Chemist. The Very Young Man hastened to do so. "The second demonstration, gentlemen," said the Chemist, "is less spectacular, but far more pertinent than the one you have just witnessed." He took the fly by the wings, and prepared another lump of sugar, sprinkling a crushed pill from the other vial upon it.

"When he is small enough I am going to try to put him on the ring, if he will stay still," said the Chemist.

The Doctor pulled the plate containing the ring forward until it was directly under the light, and everyone crowded closer to watch; already the fly was almost too small to be held. The Chemist tried to set it on

the ring, but could not; so with his other hand he brushed it lightly into the plate, where it lay, a tiny black speck against the gleaming whiteness of the china.

"Watch it carefully, gentlemen," he said as they bent closer.

"It's gone," said the Big Business Man.

"No, I can still see it," said the Doctor. Then he raised the plate closer to his face. "Now it's gone," he said.

The Chemist sat down in his chair. "It's probably still there, only too small for you to see. In a few minutes, if it took a sufficient amount of the drug, it will be small enough to fall between the molecules of the plate."

"Do you suppose it will find another inhabited universe down there?" asked the Very Young Man.

"Who knows," said the Chemist. "Very possibly it will. But the one we are interested in is here," he added, touching the ring.

"Is it your intention to take this stuff yourself, to-night?" asked the Big Business Man.

"If you will give me your help, I think so, yes. I have made all arrangements. The club has given us this room in absolute privacy for forty-eight hours. Your meals will be served here when you want them, and I am going to ask you, gentlemen, to take turns watching and guarding the ring during that time. Will you do it?"

"I should say we would!" cried the Doctor, and the others nodded assent.

"It is because I wanted you to be convinced of my entire sincerity that I have taken you so thoroughly into my confidence. Are those doors locked?" The Very Young Man locked them.

"Thank you," said the Chemist, starting to disrobe. In a moment he stood before them attired in a woolen bathing-suit of pure white. Over his shoulders was strapped tightly a narrow leather harness, supporting two silken pockets, one under each armpit. Into each of these he placed one of the vials, first laying four pills from one of them upon the table.

At this point the Banker rose from his chair and selected another in the farther corner of the room. He sank into it a crumpled heap and wiped the beads of perspiration from his face with a shaking hand.

"I have every expectation," said the Chemist, "that this suit and harness will contract in size uniformly with me. If the harness should not, then I shall have to hold the vials in my hand."

On the table, directly under the light, he spread a large silk handkerchief, upon which he placed the ring. He then produced a teaspoon, which he handed to the Doctor.

"Please listen carefully," he said, "for perhaps the whole success of my

adventure, and my life itself, may depend upon your actions during the next few minutes. You will realize, of course, that when I am still large enough to be visible to you, I shall be so small that my voice may be inaudible. Therefore, I want you to know, now, just what to expect.

"When I am something under a foot high, I shall step upon that handkerchief, where you will see my white suit plainly against its black surface. When I become less than an inch in height, I shall run over to the ring and stand beside it. When I have diminished to about a quarter of an inch, I shall climb upon it, and, as I get smaller, will follow its surface until I come to the scratch."

"I want you to watch me very closely. I may miscalculate the time and wait until I am too small to climb upon the ring. Or I may fall off. In either case, you will place that spoon beside me and I will climb into it. You will then do your best to help me get on the ring. Is all this quite clear?"

The Doctor nodded assent.

"Very well, watch me as long as I remain visible. If I have an accident, I shall take the other drug and endeavor to return to you at once. This you must expect at any moment during the next forty-eight hours. Under all circumstances, if I am alive, I shall return at the expiration of that time.

"And, gentlemen, let me caution you most solemnly, do not allow that ring to be touched until that length of time has expired. Can I depend on you?"

"Yes," they answered breathlessly.

"After I have taken the pills," the Chemist continued, "I shall not speak unless it is absolutely necessary. I do not know what my sensations will be, and I want to follow them as closely as possible." He then turned out all the lights in the room with the exception of the center electric light, that shone down directly on the handkerchief and ring.

The Chemist looked about him. "Good-by, gentlemen," he said, shaking hands all around. "Wish me luck." And without hesitation he placed the four pills in his mouth and washed them down with a swallow of water.

Silence fell on the group as the Chemist seated himself and covered his face with his hands. For perhaps two minutes the tenseness of the silence was unbroken, save by the heavy breathing of the Banker as he lay huddled in his chair.

"Oh, my God! He is growing smaller!" whispered the Big Business Man in a horrified tone to the Doctor. The Chemist raised his head and smiled at them. Then he stood up, steadying himself against a chair. He was less



than four feet high. Steadily he grew smaller before their horrified eyes. Once he made as if to speak, and the Doctor knelt down beside him. "It's all right, good-by," he said in a tiny voice.

Then he stepped upon the handkerchief. The Doctor knelt on the floor beside it, the wooden spoon ready in his hand, while the others, except the Banker, stood behind him. The figure of the Chemist, standing motionless near the edge of the handkerchief, seemed now like a little white wooden toy, hardly more than one inch in height.

Waving his hand and smiling, he suddenly started to walk and then ran swiftly over to the ring. By the time he reached it, somewhat out of breath, he was little more than twice as high as the width of its band. Without pausing, he leaped up, and sat astraddle, leaning over and holding to it tightly with his hands. In another moment he was on his feet, on the upper edge of the ring, walking carefully along its circumference toward the scratch.

The Big Business Man touched the Doctor on the shoulder and tried to smile. "He's making it," he whispered. As if in answer the little figure turned and waved its arms. They could just distinguish its white outline against the gold surface underneath.

"I don't see him," said the Very Young Man in a scared voice.

"He's right near the scratch," answered the Doctor, bending closer. Then, after a moment, "He's gone." He rose to his feet. "Good Lord! Why haven't we a microscope!" he added.

"I never thought of that," said the Big Business Man. "We could have watched him for a long time yet."

"Well, he's gone now," returned the Doctor, "and there is nothing for us to do but wait."

"I hope he finds that girl," sighed the Very Young Man, as he sat chin in hand beside the handkerchief.

The Banker snored stertorously from his mattress in a corner of the room. In an easy-chair near by, with his feet on the table, lay the Very Young Man, sleeping also.

The Doctor and the Big Business Man sat by the handkerchief conversing in low tones.

"How long has it been now?" asked the latter.

"Just forty hours," answered the Doctor, "and he said that forty-eight hours was the limit. He should come back at about ten to-night."

"I wonder if he *will* come back," questioned the Big Business Man nervously. "Lord, I wish *he* wouldn't snore so loud," he added irritably, nodding in the direction of the Banker.

They were silent for a moment, and then he went on: "You'd better try to sleep awhile," he said to the Doctor. "You're worn out. I'll watch here."

"I suppose I should," answered the Doctor wearily. "Wake up that kid; he's sleeping most of the time."

"No, I'll watch," repeated the Big Business Man; "you lie down over there."

The Doctor did so while the other settled himself more comfortably on a cushion beside the handkerchief, and prepared for his lonely watching.

The Doctor apparently dropped off to sleep at once, for he did not speak again. The Big Business Man sat staring steadily at the ring, bending nearer to it occasionally. Every ten or fifteen minutes he looked at his watch.

Perhaps an hour passed in this way, when the Very Young Man suddenly sat up and yawned. "Haven't they come back yet?" he asked in a sleepy voice.

The Big Business Man answered in a much lower tone. "What do you mean—they?" he said.

"I dreamed that he brought the girl back with him," said the Very Young Man.

"Well, if he did, they have not arrived," answered the Big Business Man. "You'd better go back to sleep. We've got six or seven hours yet."

The Very Young Man rose and crossed the room. "No, I'll watch awhile," he said, seating himself on the floor. "What time is it?"

"Quarter of three."

"He said he'd be back by ten to-night. I'm crazy to see that girl."

The Big Business Man rose and went over to a dinner-tray, standing near the door. "Lord, I'm hungry, I must have forgotten to eat to-day." He lifted up one of the silver covers. What he saw evidently encouraged him, for he drew up a chair and began his lunch.

The Very Young Man lighted a cigarette. "It will be the tragedy of my life," he said, "if he never comes back."

The Big Business Man smiled. "How about *his* life?" he answered, but the Very Young Man had fallen into a reverie and did not reply.

The Big Business Man finished his lunch in silence and was just about to light a cigar when a sharp exclamation brought him hastily to his feet.

"Come here, quick, I see something." The Very Young Man had his face close to the ring and was trembling violently.

The other pushed him back. "Let me see. Where?"

"There by the scratch; he's lying there; I can see him."

The Big Business Man looked and then hurriedly woke the Doctor.

"He's come back," he said briefly; "you can see him there." The Doctor bent down over the ring while the others woke up the Banker.

"He doesn't seem to be getting any bigger," said the Very Young Man; "he's just lying there. Maybe he's dead."

"What shall we do?" asked the Big Business Man, and made as if to pick up the ring. The Doctor shoved him away. "Don't do that!" he said sharply. "Do you want to kill him?"

"He's sitting up," cried the Very Young Man. "He's all right."

"He must have fainted," said the Doctor. "Probably he's taking more of the drug now."

"He's much larger," said the Very Young Man; "look at him!"

The tiny figure was sitting sidewise on the ring, with its feet hanging over the outer edge. It was growing perceptibly larger each instant, and in a moment it slipped down off the ring and sank in a heap on the handkerchief.

"Good Heavens! Look at him!" cried the Big Business Man. "He's all covered with blood."

The little figure presented a ghastly sight. As it steadily grew larger they could see and recognize the Chemist's haggard face, his cheek and neck stained with blood, and his white suit covered with dirt.

"Look at his feet," whispered the Big Business Man. They were horribly cut and bruised and greatly swollen.

The Doctor bent over and whispered gently, "What can I do to help you?" The Chemist shook his head. His body, lying prone upon the handkerchief, had torn it apart in growing. When he was about twelve inches in length he raised his head. The Doctor bent closer. "Some brandy, please," said a wraith of the Chemist's voice. It was barely audible.

"He wants some brandy," called the Doctor. The Very Young Man looked hastily around, then opened the door and dashed madly out of the room. When he returned, the Chemist had grown to nearly four feet. He was sitting on the floor with his back against the Doctor's knees. The Big Business Man was wiping the blood off his face with a damp napkin.

"Here!" cried the Very Young Man, thrusting forth the brandy. The Chemist drank a little of it. Then he sat up, evidently somewhat revived.

"I seem to have stopped growing," he said. "Let's finish it up now. God! How I want to be the right size again," he added fervently.

The Doctor helped him extract the vials from under his arm, and the Chemist touched one of the pills to his tongue. Then he sank back, closing his eyes. "I think that should be about enough," he murmured.

No one spoke for nearly ten minutes. Gradually the Chemist's body

grew, the Doctor shifting his position several times as it became larger. It seemed finally to have stopped growing, and was apparently nearly its former size.

"Is he asleep?" whispered the Very Young Man.

The Chemist opened his eyes.

"No," he answered. "I'm all right now, I think." He rose to his feet, the Doctor and the Big Business Man supporting him on either side.

"Sit down and tell us about it," said the Very Young Man. "Did you find the girl?"

The Chemist smiled wearily.

"Gentlemen, I cannot talk now. Let me have a bath and some dinner. Then I will tell you all about it."

The Doctor rang for an attendant, and led the Chemist to the door, throwing a blanket around him as he did so. In the doorway the Chemist paused and looked back, with a wan smile, over the wreck of the room.

"Give me an hour," he said. "And eat something yourselves while I am gone." Then he left, closing the door after him.

When he returned, fully dressed in clothes that were ludicrously large for him, the room had been straightened up, and his four friends were finishing their meal. He took his place among them quietly and lighted a cigar.

"Well, gentlemen, I suppose that you are interested to hear what happened to me," he began. The Very Young Man asked his usual question.

"Let him alone," said the Doctor.

"Was it all as you expected?" asked the Banker.

It was his first remark since the Chemist returned.

"To a great extent, yes," answered the Chemist. "But I had better tell you just what happened." The Very Young Man nodded his eager agreement.

"When I took those first four pills," began the Chemist in a quiet, even tone, "my immediate sensation was a sudden reeling of the senses, combined with an extreme nausea. This latter feeling passed after a moment.

"You will remember that I seated myself upon the floor and closed my eyes. When I opened them my head had steadied itself somewhat, but I was oppressed by a curious feeling of drowsiness, impossible to shake off.

"My first mental impression was one of wonderment when I saw you all begin to increase in size. I remember standing up beside the chair, which was then half again its normal size, and you"—indicating the Doctor—"towered beside me as a giant of nine or ten feet high.

"Steadily upward, with a curious crawling motion, grew the room and all its contents. Except for the feeling of sleep that oppressed me, I felt

quite my usual self. No change appeared happening to me, but everything else seemed growing to gigantic and terrifying proportions.

"Can you imagine a human being a hundred feet high? That is how you looked to me as I stepped upon that huge expanse of black silk and shouted my last good-by to you!

"Over to my left lay the ring, apparently fifteen or twenty feet away. T started to walk toward it, but although it grew rapidly larger, the distance separating me from it seemed to increase rather than lessen. Then I ran, and by the time T arrived it stood higher than my waist—a beautiful, shaggy, golden pit.

"I jumped upon its rim and clung to it tightly. I could feel it growing beneath me as I sat. After a moment I climbed upon its top surface and started to walk toward the point where I knew the scratch to be.

"I found myself now, as I looked about, walking upon a narrow, though ever broadening, curved path. The ground beneath my feet appeared to be a rough, yellowish quartz. This path grew rougher as I advanced. Below the bulging edges of the path, on both sides, lay a shining black plain, ridged and indented, and with a sunlike sheen on the higher portions of the ridges. On the one hand this black plain stretched in an unbroken expanse to the horizon. On the other, it appeared as a circular valley, enclosed by a shining yellow wall.

"The way had now become extraordinarily rough. I bore to the left as T advanced, keeping close to the outer edge. The other edge of the path I could not see. I clambered along hastily, and after a few moments was confronted by a row of rocks and boulders lying directly across my line of progress. I followed their course for a short distance, and finally found a space through which I could pass.

"This transverse ridge was perhaps a hundred feet deep. Behind it and extending in a parallel direction lay a tremendous valley. I knew then I had reached my first objective.

"I sat down upon the brink of the precipice and watched the cavern growing ever wider and deeper. Then I realized that I must begin my descent if ever I was to reach the bottom. For perhaps six hours I climbed steadily downward. It was a fairly easy descent after the first little while, for the ground seemed to open up before me as I advanced, changing its contour so constantly that I was never at a loss for an easy downward path.

"My feet suffered cruelly from the shaggy, metallic ground, and I soon had to stop and rig a sort of protection for the soles from a portion of the harness over my shoulder. According to the stature I was when I reached the bottom. T had descended perhaps twelve thousand feet during this time.

"The latter part of this journey found me nearing the bottom of the canon. Objects around me no longer seemed to increase in size, as had been constantly the case before, and I reasoned that probably my stature was remaining constant.

"I noticed, too, as I advanced, a curious alteration in the form of light around me. The glare from above (the sky showed only a narrow dull ribbon of blue) barely penetrated to the depths of the canon's floor. But all about me there was a soft radiance, seeming to emanate from the rocks themselves."

"The sides of the canon were shaggy and rough, beyond anything I had ever seen. Huge boulders, hundreds of feet in diameter, were embedded in them. The bottom also was strewn with similar gigantic rocks.

"I surveyed this lonely waste for some time in dismay, not knowing in what direction lay my goal. I knew that I was at the bottom of the scratch, and by the comparison of its size I realized I was well started on my journey.

"I have not told you, gentlemen, that at the time I marked the ring I made a deeper indentation in one portion of the scratch and focused the microscope upon that. This indentation I now searched for. Luckily I found it, less than half a mile away—an almost circular pit, perhaps five miles in diameter, with shining walls extending downward into blackness. There seemed no possible way of descending into it, so T sat down near its edge to think out my plan of action.

"I realized now that I was faint and hungry, and whatever T did must be done quickly. I could turn back to you, or I could go on. I decided to risk the latter course, and took twelve more of the pills—three times my original dose."

The Chemist paused for a moment, but his auditors were much too intent to question him. Then he resumed in his former matter-of-fact tone.

"After my vertigo had passed somewhat—it was much more severe than this time—I looked up and found my surroundings growing at a far more rapid rate than before. I staggered to the edge of the pit. It was opening up and widening out at an astounding rate. Already its sides were becoming rough and broken, and I saw many places where a descent would be possible.

"The feeling of sleep that had formerly merely oppressed me, combined now with my physical fatigue and the larger dose of the drug I had taken, became almost intolerable. I yielded to it for a moment, lying down on a crag near the edge of the pit. I must have become almost immediately unconscious, and remained so for a considerable time. I can remember a horrible sensation of sliding headlong for what seemed

like hours. I felt that I was sliding or falling downward. I tried to rouse but could not. Then came absolute oblivion.

"When I recovered my senses I was lying partly covered by a mass of smooth, shining pebbles. I was bruised and battered from head to foot—in a far worse condition than you first saw me in when I returned.

"I sat up and looked around. Beside me, sloped upward at an apparently increasing angle, a tremendous glossy plane. This extended, as far as I could see, both to the right and left and upward into the blackness of the sky overhead. It was this plane that had evidently broken my fall, and I had been sliding down it, bringing with me a considerable mass of rocks and boulders.

"As my senses became clearer I saw T was lying on a fairly level floor. T could see perhaps two miles in each direction. Beyond that there was only darkness. The sky overhead was unbroken by stars or light of any kind. I should have been in total darkness except, as I have told you before, that everything, even the blackness itself, seemed to be self-luminous.

"The incline down which I had fallen was composed of some smooth substance suggesting black marble. The floor underfoot was quite different—more of a metallic quality with a curious corrugation. Before me, in the dim distance, I could just make out a tiny range of hills.

"I rose, after a time, and started weakly to walk toward these hills. Though I was faint and dizzy from my fall and the lack of food, I walked for perhaps half an hour, following closely the edge of the incline. No change in my visual surroundings occurred, except that I seemed gradually to be approaching the line of hills. My situation at this time, as I turned it over in my mind, appeared hopelessly desperate, and I admit I neither expected to reach my destination nor to be able to return to my own world.

"A sudden change in the feeling of the ground underfoot brought me to myself; I bent down and found I was treading on vegetation—a tiny forest extending for quite a distance in front and to the side of me. A few steps ahead a little silver ribbon threaded its way through the trees. This I judged to be water.

"New hope possessed me at this discovery. I sat down at once and took a portion of another of the pills.

"I must again have fallen asleep. When I awoke, somewhat refreshed, I found myself lying beside the huge trunk of a fallen tree. I was in what had evidently once been a deep forest, but which now was almost utterly desolated. Only here and there were the trees left standing. For the most part they were lying in a crushed and tangled mass, many of them partially embedded in the ground.

"I cannot express adequately to you, gentlemen, what an evidence of tremendous superhuman power this scene presented. No storm, no lightning, nor any attack of the elements could have produced more than a fraction of the destruction I saw all around me.

"I climbed cautiously upon the fallen tree-trunk, and from this elevation had a much better view of my surroundings. I appeared to be near one end of the desolated area, which extended in a path about half a mile wide and several miles deep. In front, a thousand feet away, perhaps, lay the unbroken forest.

"Descending from the tree-trunk I walked in this direction, reaching the edge of the woods after possibly an hour of the most arduous traveling of my whole journey.

"During this time almost my only thought was the necessity of obtaining food. I looked about me as I advanced, and on one of the fallen tree-trunks I found a sort of vine growing. This vine bore a profusion of small gray berries, much like our huckleberries. They proved similar in taste, and I sat down and ate a quantity.

"When I reached the edge of the forest I felt somewhat stronger. I had seen up to this time no sign of animal life whatever. Now, as I stood silent, I could hear around me all the multitudinous tiny voices of the woods. Insect life stirred underfoot, and in the trees above an occasional bird flitted to and fro.

"Perhaps I am giving you a picture of our own world. I do not mean to do so. You must remember that above me there was no sky, just blackness. And yet so much light illuminated the scene that I could not believe it was other than what we would call daytime. Objects in the forest were as well lighted—better probably than they would be under similar circumstances in our own familiar world.

"The trees were of huge size compared to my present stature: straight, upstanding trunks, with no branches until very near the top. They were bluish-gray in color, and many of them well covered with the berry-vine I have mentioned. The leaves overhead seemed to be blue—in fact the predominating color of all the vegetation was blue, just as in our world it is green. The ground was covered with dead leaves, mold, and a sort of a gray moss. Fungus of a similar color appeared, but of this I did not eat.

"I had penetrated perhaps two miles into the forest when I came unexpectedly to the bank of a broad, smooth-flowing river, its silver surface seeming to radiate waves of the characteristic phosphorescent light. I found it cold, pure-tasting water, and I drank long and deeply. Then I remember lying down upon the mossy bank, and in a moment, utterly worn out, I again fell asleep."



### 3. LYLDA

"I WAS AWAKENED by the feel of soft hands upon my head and face. With a start I sat up abruptly; I rubbed my eyes confusedly for a moment, not knowing where I was. When I collected my wits I found myself staring into the face of a girl, who was kneeling on the ground before me. I recognized her at once—she was the girl of the microscope.

"To say I was startled would be to put it mildly, but I read no fear in her expression, only wonderment at my springing so suddenly into life. She was dressed very much as I had seen her before. Her fragile beauty was the same, and at this closer view infinitely more appealing, but I was puzzled to account for her older, more mature look. She seemed to have aged several years since the last evening I had seen her through the microscope. Yet, undeniably, it was the same girl.

"For some moments we sat looking at each other in wonderment. Then she smiled and held out her hand, palm up, speaking a few words as she did so. Her voice was soft and musical, and the words of a peculiar quality that we generally describe as liquid, for want of a better term. What she said was wholly unintelligible, but whether the words were strange or the intonation different from anything I knew, I could not tell.

"Afterward, during my stay in this other world, I found that the language of its people resembled English quite closely, so far as the words themselves went. But the intonation with which they were given, and the gestures accompanying them, differed so widely from our own that they conveyed no meaning.

"The gap separating us, however, was very much less than you would imagine. Strangely enough, though, it was not I who learned to speak her tongue, but she who mastered mine."

The Very Young Man sighed contentedly.

"We became quite friendly after this greeting," resumed the Chemist, "and it was apparent from her manner that she had already conceived her own idea of who and what I was.

"For some time we sat and tried to communicate with each other. My words seemed almost as unintelligible to her as hers to me, except that occasionally she would divine my meaning, clapping her hands in childish delight. I made out that she lived at a considerable distance, and that her name was Lylda. Finally she pulled me by the hand and led me away with a proprietary air that amused, and, I must admit to you, pleased me tremendously.

"We had progressed through the woods in this way, hardly more than a few hundred yards, when suddenly I found that she was taking me

into the mouth of a cave or passageway, sloping downward at an angle of perhaps twenty degrees. I noticed now, more graphically than ever before, a truth that had been gradually forcing itself upon me. Darkness was impossible in this new world. We were now shut in between narrow walls of crystalline rock, with a roof hardly more than fifty feet above.

"No artificial light of any kind was in evidence, yet the scene was lighted quite brightly. This, I have explained, was caused by the phosphorescent radiation that apparently emanated from every particle of mineral matter in this universe.

"As we advanced, many other tunnels crossed the one we were traveling. And now, occasionally, we passed other people, the men dressed similarly to Lylda, but wearing their hair chopped off just above the shoulder line.

"Later, I found that the men were generally about five and a half feet in stature: lean, muscular, and with a grayer, harder look to their skin than the iridescent quality that characterized the women.

"They were fine-looking chaps these we encountered. All of them stared curiously at me, and several times we were held up by chattering groups. The intense whiteness of my skin, for it looked in this light the color of chalk, seemed to both awe and amuse them. But they treated me with great deference and respect, which I afterward learned was because of Lylda herself, and also what she told them about me.

"At several of the intersections of the tunnels there were wide open spaces. One of these we now approached. It was a vast amphitheater, so broad its opposite wall was invisible, and it seemed crowded with people. At the side, on a rocky niche in the wall, a speaker harangued the crowd.

"We skirted the edge of this crowd and plunged into another passageway, sloping downward still more steeply. I was so much interested in the strange scenes opening before me that I remarked little of the distance we traveled. Nor did I question Lylda very often. I was absorbed in the complete similarity between this and my own world in these general characteristics, and yet its complete strangeness in details.

"I felt not the slightest fear. Indeed the sincerity and kindness of these people seemed absolutely genuine, and the friendly, naive manner of my little guide put me wholly at my ease. Toward me Lylda's manner was one of childish delight at a new-found possession. Toward those of her own people with whom we talked, I found she preserved a dignity they profoundly respected.

"We had hardly more than entered this last tunnel when I heard the sound of drums and a weird sort of piping music, followed by shouts and cheers. Figures from behind us scurried past, hastening toward the sound.

Lylda's clasp on my hand tightened, and she pulled me forward eagerly. As we advanced the crowd became denser, pushing and shoving us about and paying little attention to me.

"In close contact with these people I soon found I was stronger than they, and for a time I had no difficulty in shoving them aside and opening a path for us. They took my rough handling all in good part; in fact, never have I met a more even-tempered, good-natured people than these."

"After a time the crowd became so dense we could advance no more. At this Lylda signed me to bear to the side. As we approached the wall of the cavern she suddenly clasped her hands high over her head and shouted something in a clear, commanding voice. Instantly the crowd fell back, and in a moment I found myself being pulled up a narrow flight of stone steps in the wall and out upon a level space some twenty feet above the heads of the people.

"Several dignitaries occupied this platform. Lylda greeted them quietly, and they made place for us beside the parapet. I could see now that we were at the intersection of a transverse passageway, much broader than the one we had been traversing. And now I received the greatest surprise I had had in this new world, for down this latter tunnel was passing a broad line of men who obviously were soldiers.

"The uniformly straight lines they held; the glint of light on the spears they carried upright before them; the weird, but rhythmic, music that passed at intervals, with which they kept step; and, above all, the cheering enthusiasm of the crowd, all seemed like an echo of my own great world above.

"This martial ardor and what it implied came as a distinct shock. All I had seen before showed the gentle kindness of a people whose life seemed far removed from the struggle for existence to which our race is subjected. I had come gradually to feel that this new world, at least, had attained the golden age of security, and that fear, hate, and wrongdoing had long since passed away, or had never been born.

"Yet here, before my very eyes, made wholesome by the fires of patriotism, stalked the grim God of War. Knowing nothing yet of the motives that inspired these people, I could feel no enthusiasm, but only disillusionment at this discovery of the omnipotence of strife.

"For some time I must have stood in silence. Lylda, too, seemed to divine my thoughts, for she did not applaud, but pensively watched the cheering throng below. All at once, with an impulsively appealing movement, she pulled me down toward her, and pressed her pretty cheek to mine. It seemed almost as if she was asking me to help.

"The line of marching men seemed now to have passed, and the crowd surged over into the open space and began to disperse. As the men upon the platform with us prepared to leave, Lylda led me over to one of them. He was nearly as tall as I, and dressed in the characteristic tunic that seemed universally worn by both sexes. The upper part of his body was hung with beads, and across his chest was a thin, slightly convex stone plate.

"After a few words of explanation from Lylda, he laid his hands on my shoulders near the base of the neck, smiling with his words of greeting. Then he held one hand before me, palm up, as Lylda had done, and I laid mine in it, which seemed the correct thing to do.

"I repeated this performance with two others who joined us, and then Lylda pulled me away. We descended the steps and turned into the broader tunnel, finding near at hand a sort of sleigh, which Lylda signed me to enter. It was constructed evidently of wood, with a pile of leaves, or similar dead vegetation, for cushions. It was balanced upon a single runner of polished stone, about two feet broad, with a narrow, slightly shorter outrider on each side.

"Harnessed to the shaft were two animals, more resembling our reindeer than anything else, except that they were gray in color and had no horns. An attendant greeted Lylda respectfully as we approached, and mounted a seat in front of us when we were comfortably settled.

"We drove in this curious vehicle for over an hour. The floor of the tunnel was quite smooth, and we glided down its incline with little effort and at a good rate. Our driver preserved the balance of the sleigh by shifting his body from side to side so that only at rare intervals did the side-runners touch the ground.

"Finally, we emerged into the open, and I found myself viewing a scene of almost normal, earthly aspect. We were near the shore of a smooth, shining lake. At the side a broad stretch of rolling country, dotted here and there with trees, was visible. Near at hand, on the lake shore, I saw a collection of houses, most of them low and flat, with one much larger on a promontory near the lake.

"Overhead arched a gray-blue, cloudless sky, faintly star-studded, and reflected in the lake before me I saw that familiar, gleaming trail of star-dust, hanging like a huge straightened rainbow overhead, and ending at my feet."

The Chemist paused and relighted his cigar. "Perhaps you have some questions," he suggested.

The Doctor shifted in his chair.

"Did you have any theory at this time"—he wanted to know—"about

the physical conformation of this world? What I mean is, when you came out of this tunnel, were you on the inside or the outside of the world?"

"Was it the same sky you saw overhead when you were in the forest?" asked the Big Business Man.

"No, it was what he saw in the microscope, wasn't it?" said the Very Young Man.

"One at a time, gentlemen." The Chemist laughed. "No, I had no particular theory at this time—I had too many other things to think of. But I do remember noticing one thing which gave me the clue to a fairly complete understanding of this universe. From it I formed a definite explanation, which I found was the belief held by the people themselves."

"What was that?" asked the Very Young Man.

"I noticed,—as I stood looking over this broad expanse of country before me, one vital thing that made it different from any similar scene I had ever beheld. If you will stop and think a moment, gentlemen, you will realize that in our world here the horizon is caused by a curvature of the earth below the straight line of vision. We are on a convex surface. But as I gazed over this landscape—and even with no appreciable light from the sky, I could see a distance of several miles—I saw at once that quite the reverse was true. I seemed to be standing in the center of a vast shallow bowl. The ground curved upward into the distance. There was no distinct horizon line, only the gradual fading into shadow of the visual landscape. I was standing, obviously, on a concave surface, on the inside, not the outside of the world.

"The situation, as I now understand it, was this: According to the smallest stature I reached, and calling my height at that time roughly six feet, I had descended into the ring at the time I met Lylda several thousand miles, at least. By the way, where is the ring?"

"Here it is," said the Very Young Man, handing it to him. The Chemist replaced it on his finger. "It's pretty important to me now," he said, smiling.

"You bet!" agreed the Very Young Man.

"You can readily understand how I descended such a distance, if you consider the comparative immensity of my stature during the first few hours I was in the ring. It is my understanding that this country through which I passed is a barren waste—merely the atoms of the mineral we call gold.

"Beyond that I entered the hitherto unexplored regions within the atom. The country at that point where I found the forest, I was told later, is habitable for several hundred miles. Around it on all sides lies a desert, across which no one has ever penetrated.

"This surface is the outside of the Oroid world, for so they call their

earth. At this point the shell between the outer and inner surface is only a few miles in thickness. The two surfaces do not parallel each other here, so that in descending these tunnels we turned hardly more than an eighth of a complete circle.

"At the city of Arite, where Lylda first took me, and where I had my first view of the inner surface, the curvature is slightly greater than that of our own earth, although, as I have said, in the opposite direction."

"And the space within this curvature—the heavens you have mentioned—how great do you estimate it to be?" asked the Doctor.

"Based on the curvature at Arite it would be about six thousand miles in diameter."

"Has this entire inner surface been explored?" asked the Big Business Man.

"No, only a small portion. The Oroids are not an adventurous people. There are only two nations, less than twelve million people altogether, on a surface nearly as extensive as our own."

"How about those stars?" suggested the Very Young Man.

"I believe they comprise a complete universe similar to our solar system. There is a central sun-star, around which many of the others revolve. You must understand, though, that these other worlds are infinitely tiny compared to the Oroids, and, if inhabited, support beings nearly as much smaller than the Oroids, as they are smaller than you."

"Great Caesar!" ejaculated the Banker. "Don't let's go into that any deeper!"

"Tell us more about Lylda," prompted the Very Young Man.

"You are insatiable on that point," said the Chemist, laughing. "Well, when we left the sleigh, Lylda took me directly into the city of Arite. I found it an orderly collection of low houses, seemingly built of uniformly cut, highly polished gray blocks. As we passed through the streets, some of which were paved with similar blocks, I was reminded of nothing so much as the old jingles of Spotless Town. Everything was immaculately, inordinately clean. Indeed, the whole city seemed built of some curious form of opaque glass, newly scrubbed and polished.

"Children crowded from the doorways as we advanced, but Lylda dispersed them with a gentle, though firm, command. As we approached the sort of castle I have mentioned, the reason for Lylda's authoritative manner dawned upon me. She was, I soon learned, daughter of one of the most learned men of the nation and was—hand-maiden, do you call it?—to the queen."

"So it was a monarchy?" interrupted the Big Business Man. "I should never have thought that."

"Lylda called their leader a king. In reality he was the president, chosen by the people, for a period of about what we would term twenty years; I learned something about this republic during my stay, but not as much as I would have liked. Politics was not Lylda's strong point, and T had to get it all from her, you know."

"For several days I was housed royally in the castle. Food was served me by an attendant who evidently was assigned solely to look after my needs. At first I was terribly confused by the constant, uniform light, but when I found certain hours set aside for sleep, just as we have them, when I began to eat regularly, I soon fell into the routine of this new life.

"The food was not greatly different from our own, although I found not a single article I could identify. It consisted principally of vegetables and fruits, the latter of an apparently inexhaustible variety.

"Lylda visited me at intervals, and I learned I was awaiting an audience with the king. During these days she made rapid progress with my language—so rapid that I shortly gave up the idea of mastering hers.

"And now, with the growing intimacy between us and our ability to communicate more readily, I learned the simple, tragic story of her race—new details, of course, but the old, old tale of might against right, and the tragedy of a trusting, kindly people, blindly thinking others as just as themselves.

"For thousands of years, since the master life-giver had come from one of the stars to populate the world, the Oroid nation had dwelt in peace and security. These people cared nothing for adventure. No restless thirst for knowledge led them to explore deeply the limitless land surrounding them. Even from the earliest times no struggle for existence, no doctrine of the survival of the fittest, hung over them as with us. No wild animals harassed them; no savages menaced them. A fertile boundless land, a perfect climate, nurtured them tenderly.

"Under such conditions they developed only the softer, gentler qualities of nature. Many laws among them were unnecessary, for life was so simple, so pleasant to live, and the attainment of all the commonly accepted standards of wealth so easy, that the incentive to wrongdoing was almost non-existent.

"Strangely enough, and fortunately, too, no individuals rose among them with the desire for power. Those in command were respected and loved as true workers for the people, and they accepted their authority in the same spirit with which it was given. Indolence, in its highest sense the wonderful art of doing nothing gracefully, played the greatest part in their life.

"Then, after centuries of ease and peaceful security, came the awakening. Almost without warning another nation had come out of the unknown to attack them.

"With the hurt feeling that comes to a child unjustly treated, they all but succumbed to this first onslaught. The abduction of numbers of their women, for such seemed the principal purpose of the invaders, aroused them sufficiently to repel this first crude attack. Their manhood challenged, their anger as a nation awakened for the first time, they sprang as one man into the horror we call war.

"With the defeat of the Malites came another period of ease and security. They had learned no lesson, but went their indolent way, playing through life like the kindly children they were. During this last period some intercourse between them and the Malites took place. The latter people, whose origin was probably nearly opposite them on the inner surface, had by degrees pushed their frontiers closer and closer to the Oroids. Trade between the two was carried on to some extent, but the character of the Malites, their instinctive desire for power, for its own sake, their consideration for themselves as superior beings, caused them to be distrusted and feared by their more simple-minded companion nation.

"You can almost guess the rest, gentlemen. Lylda told me little about the Malites, but the loathing disgust of her manner, her hesitancy even to bring herself to mention them, spoke more eloquently than words.

"Four years ago, as they measure time, came the second attack, and now, in a huge arc, only a few hundred miles from Arite, hung the opposing armies."

The Chemist paused. "That's the condition I found, gentlemen," he said. "Not a strikingly original or unfamiliar situation, was it?"

"By Jove!" remarked the Doctor thoughtfully. "What a curious thing that the environment of our earth should so affect that world inside the ring. It does make you stop and think, doesn't it, to realize how those infinitesimal creatures are actuated now by the identical motives that inspire us?"

"Yet it does seem very reasonable, I should say," the Big Business Man put in.

"Let's have another round of drinks," suggested the Banker. "This is dry work!"

"As a scientist you'd make a magnificent plumber, George!" retorted the Big Business Man. "You're about as helpful in this little gathering as—as an oyster!"

The Very Young Man rang for a waiter.

"I've been thinking—" began the Banker, and stopped at the smile of



his companion. "Shut up!" he finished. "That's cheap wit, you know!"

"Go on, George," encouraged the other, "you've been thinking—"

"I've been tremendously interested in this extraordinary story"—he addressed himself to the Chemist—"but there's one point I don't get at all. How many days were you in that ring do you make out?"

"I believe about seven, all told," returned the Chemist.

"But you were only away from us some forty hours. I ought to know, I've been right here." He looked at his crumpled clothes somewhat ruefully.

"The change of time-progress was one of the surprises of my adventure," said the Chemist. "It is easily explained in a general way, although I cannot even attempt a scientific theory of its cause. But I must confess that before I started, the possibility of such a thing never even occurred to me.

"To get a conception of this change you must analyze definitely what time is. We measure and mark it by years, months, and so forth, down to minutes and seconds, all based upon the movements of our earth around its sun. But that is the measurement of time, not time itself. How would you describe time?"

The Big Business Man smiled. "Time," he said, "is what keeps everything from happening at once."

"Very clever," said the Chemist, laughing.

The Doctor leaned forward earnestly. "I should say," he began, "that time is the rate at which we live—the speed at which we successively pass through our existence from birth to death. It's very hard to put intelligibly, but I think I know what I mean," he finished somewhat lamely.

"Exactly so. Time is a rate of life-progress, different for every individual, and only made standard because we take the time-duration of the earth's revolution around the sun, which is constant, and arbitrarily say: 'That is thirty-one million five hundred and thirty-six-thousand seconds.'"

"Is time different for every individual?" asked the Banker argumentatively.

"Think a moment," returned the Chemist. "Suppose your brain were to work twice as fast as mine. Suppose your heart beat twice as fast, and all the functions of your body were accelerated in a like manner. What we call a second would certainly seem to you twice as long. Further than that, it actually would be twice as long, so far as you were concerned. Your digestion, instead of taking perhaps four hours, would take two. You would eat twice as often. The desire for sleep would overtake you every twelve hours instead of twenty-four, and you would be satisfied with four hours of unconsciousness instead of eight. In short, you would soon be living a cycle of two days every twenty-four hours. Time then,

as we measure it, for you at least, would have doubled—you would be progressing through life at twice the rate that I am through mine."

"That may be theoretically true," the Big Business Man put in. "Practically, though, it has never happened to anyone."

"Of course not, to such a great degree as the instance I put. No one, except in disease, has ever doubled our average rate of life-progress, and lived it out as a balanced, otherwise normal existence. But there is no question that to some much smaller degree we all of us differ one from the other. The difference, however, is so comparatively slight, that we can each one reconcile it to the standard measurement of time. And so, outwardly, time is the same for all of us. But inwardly, why, we none of us conceive a minute or an hour to be the same. How do you know how long a minute is to me? More than that, time is not constant even in the same individual. How many hours are shorter to you than others? How many days have been almost interminable? No, instead of being constant, there is nothing more inconstant than time."

"Haven't you confused two different issues?" suggested the Big Business Man. "Granted what you say about the slightly different rate at which different individuals live, isn't it quite another thing, how long time seems to you? A day when you have nothing to do seems long, or, on the other hand, if you are very busy it seems short. But mind, it only *seems* short or long, according to the preoccupation of your mind. That has nothing to do with the speed of your progress through life."

"Ah, but I think it has!" cried the Chemist. "You forget that we none of us have all of the one thing to the exclusion of the other. Time seems short; it seems long, and in the end it all averages up, and makes our rate of progress what it is. Now if any of us were to go through life in a calm, deliberate way, making time seem as long as possible, he would live more years, as we measure them, than if he rushed headlong through the days, accomplishing always as much as possible. I mean in neither case to go to the extremes, but only so far as would be consistent with the maintenance of a normal standard of health. How about it?" He turned to the Doctor. "You ought to have an opinion on that."

"I rather think you are right," said the latter thoughtfully, "although I doubt very much if the man who took it easy would do as much during his longer life as the other with his energy would accomplish in the lesser time that had been allotted to him."

"Probably he wouldn't," said the Chemist; "but that does not alter the point we are discussing."

"How does this apply to the world in the ring?" ventured the Very Young Man, somewhat timidly.

"I believe there is a very close relationship between the dimensions

of length, breadth, and thickness, and time. Just what connection with them it has, I have no idea. Yet, when size changes, time-rate changes; you have only to look at our own universe to discover that circumstance."

"How do you mean?" asked the Very Young Man.

"Why, all life on our earth, in a general way, illustrates the fundamental fact that the larger a thing is, the slower its time-progress is. An elephant, for example, lives more years than we humans. Yet a fly is born, matured, and aged in a few months. There are exceptions, of course; but in a majority of cases it is true.

"So fundamental is this fact that the same condition holds with the heavenly bodies. Mercury, smallest of the planets, travels the fastest. Venus, slower, but faster than the earth, and so on throughout the solar system.

"So I believe that as I diminished in stature, my time-progress became faster and faster. I am seven days older than when I left you day before yesterday. I have lived those seven days, gentlemen, there is no way of getting around that fact."

"This is all tremendously interesting," sighed the Big Business Man; "but not very comprehensible."

#### 4. STRATEGY AND KISSES

"IT WAS THE morning of my third day in the castle," began the Chemist again, "that I was taken by Lylda before the king. We found him seated alone in a little anteroom, overlooking a large courtyard, which we could see was crowded with an expectant, waiting throng. I must explain to you now, that I was considered by Lylda somewhat in the light of a Messiah, come to save her nation from the destruction that threatened it.

"She believed me a supernatural being, which, indeed, if you come to think of it, gentlemen, is exactly what I was. I tried to tell her something of myself and the world I had come from, but the difficulties of language and her smiling insistence and faith in her own conception of me, soon caused me to desist. Thereafter I let her have her own way, and did not attempt any explanation again for some time.

"For several weeks before Lylda found me sleeping by the river's edge, she had made almost a daily pilgrimage to that vicinity. A maidenly premonition, a feeling that had first come to her several years before, told her of my coming, and her father's knowledge and scientific beliefs had led her to the outer surface of the world as the direction in which to look. A curious circumstance, gentlemen, lies in the fact that Lylda clearly remembered the occasion when this first premonition came to her.

And in the telling, she described graphically the scene in the cave, where I saw her through the microscope." The Chemist paused an instant and then resumed.

"When we entered the presence of the king, he greeted me quietly, and made me sit by his side, while Lylda knelt on the floor at our feet. The king impressed me as a man about fifty years of age. He was smooth-shaven, with black, wavy hair, reaching his shoulders. He was dressed in the usual tunic, the upper part of his body covered by a quite similar garment, ornamented with a variety of metal objects. His feet were protected with a sort of buckskin; at his side hung a crude-looking metal spear.

"The conversation that followed my entrance, lasted perhaps fifteen minutes. Lylda interpreted for us as well as she could, though I must confess we were all three at times completely at a loss. But Lylda's bright, intelligent little face, and the resourcefulness of her gestures, always managed somehow to convey her meaning. The charm and grace of her manner, all during the talk, her winsomeness, and the almost spiritual kindness and tenderness that characterized her, made me feel that she embodied all those qualities with which we of this earth idealize our own womanhood.

"I found myself falling steadily under the spell of her beauty, until—well, gentlemen, it's childish for me to enlarge upon this side of my adventure, you know; but—Lylda means everything to me now, and I'm going back for her just as soon as I possibly can."

"Good for you!" cried the Very Young Man. "Why didn't you bring her with you this time?"

"Let him tell it his own way," remonstrated the Doctor. The Very Young Man subsided with a sigh.

"During our talk," resumed the Chemist, "I learned from the king that Lylda had promised him my assistance in overcoming the enemies that threatened his country. He smilingly told me that our charming little interpreter had assured him I would be able to do this. Lylda's blushing face, as she conveyed this meaning to me, was so thoroughly captivating, that before I knew it, and quite without meaning to, I pulled her up toward me and kissed her.

"The king was more surprised by far than Lylda, at this extraordinary behavior. Obviously neither of them had understood what a kiss meant, although Lylda, by her manner, evidently comprehended pretty thoroughly.

"I told them then, as simply as possible to enable Lylda to get my meaning, that I could, and would gladly aid in their war. I explained, then, that I had the power to change my stature, and could make myself grow very large or very small in a short space of time.

"This, as Lylda evidently told it to him, seemed quite beyond the king's understanding. He comprehended finally, or at least he agreed to believe my statement.

"This led to the consideration of practical questions of how I was to proceed in their war. I had not considered any details before, but now they appeared of the utmost simplicity. All I had to do was to make myself a hundred or two hundred feet high, walk out to the battle lines, and scatter the opposing army like toys."

"What a quaint idea!" said the Banker. "A modern *Gulliver*."

The Chemist did not heed this interruption.

"Then like three children we plunged into a discussion of exactly how I was to perform these wonders, the king laughing heartily as we pictured the attack on my tiny enemies.

"He then asked me how I expected to accomplish this change of size, and I very briefly told him of our larger world, and the manner in which I had come from it into his. Then I showed the drugs that I still carried carefully strapped to me. This seemed definitely to convince the king of my sincerity. He rose abruptly to his feet, and strode through a doorway onto a small balcony overlooking the courtyard below.

"As he stepped out into the view of the people, a great cheer arose. He waited quietly for them to stop, and then raised his hand and began speaking. Lylda and I stood hand in hand in the shadow of the doorway, out of sight of the crowd, but with it and the entire courtyard plainly in our view.

"It was a quadrangular enclosure, formed by the four sides of the palace, perhaps three hundred feet across, packed solidly now with people of both sexes, the gleaming whiteness of the upper parts of their bodies, and their upturned faces, making a striking picture.

"For perhaps ten minutes the king spoke steadily, save when he was interrupted by applause. Then he stopped abruptly, and turning, pulled Lylda and me out upon the balcony. The enthusiasm of the crowd doubled at our appearance. I was pushed forward to the balcony rail, where I bowed repeatedly to the cheering throng.

"Just after I left the king's balcony, I met Lylda's father. He was a kindly-faced old gentleman, and took a great interest in me and my story. He it was who told me about the physical conformation of his world, and he seemed to comprehend my explanation of mine.

"That night it rained—a heavy, torrential downpour, such as we have in the tropics. Lylda and I had been talking for some time, and, I must confess, I had been making love to her ardently. I broached now the principal object of my entrance into her world, and, with an eloquence T did not believe T possessed, I pictured the wonders of our

own great earth above, begging her to come back with me and live out her life with mine in my world.

"Much of what I said, she probably did not understand, but the main facts were intelligible without question. She listened quietly. When I had finished, and waited for her decision, she reached slowly out and clutched my shoulders, awkwardly making as if to kiss me. In an instant she was in my arms, with a low, happy little cry."

The clattering fall of rain brought us to ourselves. Rising to her feet, Lylda pulled me over to the window-opening, and together we stood and looked out into the night. The scene before us was beautiful, with a weirdness almost impossible to describe. It was as bright as I had ever seen this world, for even though very heavy clouds hung overhead, the light from the stars was never more than a negligible quantity.

"We were facing the lake—a shining expanse of silver radiation, its surface shifting and crawling, as though a great undulating blanket of silver mist lay upon it. And coming down to meet it from the sky were innumerable lines of silver—a vast curtain of silver cords that broke apart into great strings of pearls when I followed their downward course.

"And then, as I turned to Lylda, I was struck with the extraordinary weirdness of her beauty as never before. The reflected light from the rain had something the quality of our moonlight. Shining on Lylda's body, it tremendously enhanced the iridescence of her skin. And her face, upturned to mine, bore an expression of radiant happiness and peace such as I had never seen before in a woman's countenance."

The Chemist paused, his voice dying away into silence as he sat lost in thought. Then he pulled himself together with a start. "It was a sight, gentlemen, the memory of which I shall cherish all my life.

"The next day was that set for my entrance into the war. Lylda and I had talked nearly all night, and had decided that she was to return with me to my world. By morning the rain had stopped, and we sat together in the window-opening, silenced with the thrill of the wonderful new joy that had come into our hearts.

"The country before us, under the cloudless, starry sky, stretched gray-blue and beautiful into the quivering obscurity of the distance. At our feet lay the city, just awakening into life. Beyond, over the rolling meadows and fields, wound the road that led out to the battle-front, and coming back over it now, we could see an endless line of vehicles. These, as they passed through the street beneath our window, I found were loaded with soldiers, wounded and dying. I shuddered at the sight of one cart in particular, and Lylda pressed closer to me, pleading with her eyes for my help for her stricken people.

"My exit from the castle was made quite a ceremony. A band of music and a guard of several hundred soldiers ushered me forth, walking beside the king, with Lylda a few paces behind. As we passed through the streets of the city, heading for the open country beyond, we were cheered continually by the people who thronged the streets and crowded upon the house-tops to watch us pass.

"Outside Arite I was taken perhaps a mile, where a wide stretch of country gave me the necessary space for my growth. We were standing upon a slight hill, below which, in a vast semicircle, fully a hundred thousand people were watching.

"And now, for the first time, fear overtook me. I realized my situation—saw myself in a detached sort of way—a stranger in this extraordinary world, with only the power of my drug to raise me out of it. This drug you must remember, I had not as yet taken. Suppose it were not to act? Or were to act wrongly?

"I glanced around. The king stood before me, quietly waiting my pleasure. Then I turned to Lylda. One glance at her proud, happy little face, and my fear left me as suddenly as it had come. I took her in my arms and kissed her there before that multitude. Then I set her down, and signified to the king I was ready.

"I took a minute quantity of one of the drugs, and as I had done before, sat down with my eyes covered. My sensations were fairly similar to those I have already described. When I looked up after a moment, I found the landscape dwindling to tiny proportions in quite as astonishing a way as it had grown before. The king and Lylda stood now hardly above my ankle.

"A great cry arose from the people—a cry wherein horror, fear, and applause seemed equally mixed. I looked down and saw thousands of them running away in terror.

"Still smaller grew everything within my vision, and then, after a moment, the landscape seemed at rest. I kneeled now upon the ground, carefully, to avoid treading on any of the people around me. I located Lylda and the king after a moment; tiny little creatures less than an inch in height. I was then, I estimated, from their viewpoint, about four hundred feet tall.

"I put my hand flat upon the ground near Lylda, and after a moment she climbed into it, two soldiers lifting her up the side of my thumb as it lay upon the ground. In the hollow of my palm, she lay quite securely, and very carefully I raised her up toward my face. Then, seeing that she was frightened, I set her down again.

"At my feet, hardly more than a few steps away, lay the tiny city of Arite and the lake. I could see all around the latter now, and could

make out clearly a line of hills on the other side. Off to the left the road wound up out of sight in the distance. As far as I could see, a line of soldiers was passing out along this road—marching four abreast, with carts at intervals, loaded evidently with supplies; only occasionally, now, vehicles passed in the other direction. Can I make it plain to you, gentlemen, my sensations in changing stature? I felt at first as though I were tremendously high in the air, looking down as from a balloon upon the familiar territory beneath me.

"That feeling passed after a few moments, and I found that my point of view had changed. I no longer felt that I was looking down from a balloon, but felt as a normal person feels. And again I conceived myself but six feet tall, standing above a dainty little toy world. It is all in the viewpoint, of course, and never, during all my changes, was I for more than a moment able to feel of a different stature than I am at this present instant. It was always everything else that changed."

"According to the directions I had received from the king, I started now to follow the course of the road. I found it difficult walking, for the country was dotted with houses, trees, and cultivated fields, and each footstep was a separate problem.

"I progressed in this manner perhaps two miles, covering what the day before I would have called about a hundred and thirty or forty miles. The country became wilder as I advanced, and now was in places crowded with separate collections of troops.

"I have not mentioned the commotion I made in this walk over the country. My coming must have been told widely by couriers the night before, to soldiers and peasantry alike, or the sight of me would have caused utter demoralization. As it was, I must have been terrifying to a tremendous degree. I think the careful way in which I picked my course, stepping in the open as much as possible, helped reassure the people. Behind me, whenever I turned, they seemed rather more curious than fearful, and once or twice when I stopped for a few moments they approached my feet closely. One athletic young soldier caught the loose end of the string of one of my buskins, as it hung over my instep close to the ground, and pulled himself up hand over hand, amid the enthusiastic cheers of his admiring comrades.

"I had walked nearly another mile, when almost in front of me, and perhaps a hundred yards away, I saw a remarkable sight that I did not at first understand. The country here was crossed by a winding river running in a general way at right angles to my line of progress. At the right, near at hand, and on the nearer bank of the river, lay a little city, perhaps half the size of Arite; with its back up against a hill.



"What first attracted my attention was that, from a dark patch across the river which seemed to be woods, pebbles appeared to pop up at intervals, traversing a little arc perhaps as high as my knees, and falling into the city. I watched for a moment and then I understood. There was a siege in progress, and the catapults of the Malites were bombarding the city with rocks.

"I went up a few steps closer, and the pebbles stopped coming. I stood now beside the city, and as I bent over it, I could see by the battered houses the havoc the bombardment had caused. Inert little figures lay in the streets, and I bent lower and inserted my thumb and forefinger between a row of houses and picked one up. It was the body of a woman, partly mashed. I set it down again hastily.

"Then as I stood up, I felt a sting on my leg. A pebble had hit me on the shin and dropped at my feet. I picked it up. It was the size of a small walnut—a huge boulder six feet or more in diameter it would have been in Lylda's eyes. At the thought of her I was struck with a sudden fit of anger. I flung the pebble violently down into the wooded patch and leaped over the river in one bound, landing squarely on both feet in the woods. It was like jumping into a patch of ferns.

"I stamped about me for a moment until a large part of the woods was crushed down. Then I bent over and poked around with my finger. Underneath the tangled wreckage of tiny tree trunks, lay numbers of the Malites. I must have trodden upon a thousand or more, as one would stamp upon insects.

"The sight sickened me at first, for after all, I could not look upon them as other than men, even though they were only the length of my thumb-nail. I walked a few steps forward, and in all directions I could see swarms of the little creatures running. Then the memory of my coming departure from the world with Lylda, and my promise to the king to rid his land once and for all from these people, made me feel again that they, like vermin, were to be destroyed.

"Without looking directly down, I spent the next two hours stamping over this entire vicinity. Then I ran two or three miles directly toward the country of the Malites, and returning I stamped along the course of the river for a mile or so in both directions. Then I walked back to Arite, again picking my way carefully among crowds of the Oroids, who now feared me so little that I had difficulty in moving around without stepping upon them.

"When I had regained my former size, which needed two successive doses of the drug, I found myself surrounded by a crowd of the Oroids, pushing and shoving each other in an effort to get close to me. The news of my success over their enemy had been divined by them, evidently.

Lord knows it must have been obvious enough what I was going to do, when they saw me stride away, a being four hundred feet tall.

"Their enthusiasm and thankfulness now was so mixed with awe and reverent worship of me as a divine being, that when I advanced toward Arite they opened a path immediately. The king, accompanied by Lylda, met me at the edge of the city. The latter threw herself into my arms at once, crying with relief to find me the proper size for her world once more.

"I need not go into details of the ceremonies of rejoicing that took place this afternoon. These people seemed little given to pomp and public demonstration. The king made a speech from his balcony, telling them all I had done, and the city was given over to festivities and preparations to receive suitably the returning soldiers."

The Chemist pushed his chair back from the table, and moistened his dry lips with a swallow of water. "I tell you, gentlemen," he continued, "I felt pretty happy that day. It's a wonderful feeling to find yourself the actual savior of a nation."

At that the Doctor jumped to his feet, overturning his chair, and striking the table a blow with his fist that made the glasses dance.

"By God!" he fairly shouted. "That's just what you can be here to us."

The Banker looked startled, while the Very Young Man pulled the Chemist by the coat in his eagerness to be heard. "A few of those pills," he said in a voice that quivered with excitement, "when you are standing near enemy country, and you can kick the houses apart with the toe of your boot."

"Why not?" said the Big Business Man, and silence fell on the group as they stared at each other, awed by the possibilities that suddenly opened up before them.

## 5. "I MUST GO BACK!"

THE TREMENDOUS plan for the salvation of their own suffering world through the Chemist's discovery occupied the five friends for some time. Then laying aside this subject, that now had become of the most vital importance to them all, the Chemist resumed his narrative.

"My last evening in the world of the ring, I spent with Lylda, discussing our future, and making plans for the journey. I must tell you now, gentlemen, that never for a moment during my stay in Arite was I once free from an awful dread of this return trip. I tried to conceive what it would be like, and the more I thought about it, the more hazardous it seemed.

"You must realize, when I was growing smaller, coming in, I was able to climb down, or fall or slide down, into the spaces as they opened up. Going back, I could only imagine the world as closing in upon me, crushing me to death unless I could find a larger space immediately above into which I could climb.

"And as I talked with Lylda about this and tried to make her understand what I hardly understood myself, I gradually was brought to realize the full gravity of the danger confronting us. If only I had made the trip out once before, I could have ventured it with her. But as I looked at her fragile little body, to expose it to the terrible possibilities of such a journey was unthinkable.

"There was another question, too, that troubled me. I had been gone from you nearly a week, and you were only to wait for me two days. I believed firmly that I was living at a faster rate, and that probably my time with you had not expired. But I did not know. And suppose, when I had come out on to the surface of the ring, one of you had had it on his finger walking along the street? No, I did not want Lylda with me in that event.

"And so I told her—made her understand—that she must stay behind, and that I would come back for her. She did not protest. She said nothing—just looked up into my face with wide, staring eyes and a little quiver of her lips. Then she clutched my hand and fell into a low, sobbing cry.

"I held her in my arms for a few moments, so little, so delicate, so human in her sorrow, and yet almost superhuman in her radiant beauty. Soon she stopped crying and smiled up at me bravely.

"Next morning I left. Lylda took me through the tunnels and back into the forest by the river's edge where I had first met her. There we parted. I can see, now, her pathetic, drooping little figure as she trudged back to the tunnel.

"When she had disappeared, I sat down to plan out my journey. I resolved now to reverse as nearly as possible the steps I had taken coming in. Acting on this decision, I started back to that portion of the forest where I had trampled it down.

"I found the place without difficulty, stopping once on the way to eat a few berries, and some of the food I carried with me. Then I took a small amount of one of the drugs, and in a few moments the forest-trees had dwindled into tiny twigs beneath my feet.

"I started now to find the huge incline down which I had fallen, and when I reached it, after some hours of wandering, I followed its bottom edge to where a pile of rocks and dirt marked my former landing place.

The rocks were much larger than I remembered them, and so I knew I was not so large, now, as when I was here before.

"Remembering the amount of the drug I had taken coming down, I took now twelve of the pills. Then, in a sudden panic, I hastily took two of the others. The result made my head swim most horribly. I sat or lay down, I forget which. When I looked up I saw the hills beyond the river and forest coming toward me, yet dwindling away beneath my feet as they approached. The incline seemed folding up upon itself like a telescope. As I watched, its upper edge came into view, a curved, luminous line against the blackness above. Every instant it crawled down closer, more sharply curved, and its inclined surface grew steeper.

"All this time, as I stood still, the ground beneath my feet seemed to be moving. It was crawling toward me, and folding up underneath where I was standing. Frequently I had to move to avoid rocks that came at me and passed under my feet into nothingness.

"Then, all at once, I realized that I had been stepping constantly backward, to avoid the incline wall as it shoved itself toward me. I turned to see what was behind, and horror made my flesh creep at what I saw. A black, forbidding wall, much like the incline in front, entirely encircled me. It was hardly more than half a mile away, and towered four or five thousand feet overhead.

"And as I stared in terror, I could see it closing in, the line of its upper edge coming steadily closer and lower. I looked wildly around with an overpowering impulse to run. In every direction towered this rocky wall, inexorably swaying in to crush me.

"I think I fainted. When I came to myself the scene had not greatly changed. I was lying at the bottom and against one wall of a circular pit, now about a thousand feet in diameter and nearly twice as deep. The wall all around I could see was almost perpendicular, and it seemed impossible to ascend its smooth, shining sides. The action of the drug had evidently worn off, for everything was quite still.

"My fear had now left me, for I remembered this circular pit quite well. I walked over to its center, and looking around and up to its top, I estimated distance carefully. Then I took two more of the pills.

"Immediately the familiar, sickening, crawling sensation began again. As the walls closed in upon me, I kept carefully in the center of the pit. Steadily they crept in. Now only a few hundred feet away! Now only a few paces—and then I reached out and touched both sides at once with my hands.

"I tell you, gentlemen, it was a terrifying sensation to stand in that well (as it now seemed) and feel its walls closing up with irresistible force. But now the upper edge was within reach of my fingers. I leaped

upward and hung for a moment, then pulled myself up and scrambled out, tumbling in a heap on the ground above. As I recovered myself, I looked again at the hole out of which I had escaped; it was hardly big enough to contain my fist.

"I knew, now, I was at the bottom of the scratch. But how different it looked than before. It seemed this time a long, narrow canon, hardly more than sixty feet across. I glanced up and saw the blue sky overhead that I knew was the space of this room above the ring.

"The problem now was quite a different one than getting out of the pit, for I saw that the scratch was so deep in proportion to its width that if I let myself get too big, I would be crushed by its walls before I could jump out. It would be necessary, therefore, to stay comparatively small and climb up its side.

"I selected what appeared to be an especially rough section, and took a portion of another of the pills. Then I started to climb. After an hour the buskins on my feet were torn to fragments, and I was bruised and battered as you saw me. I see, now, how I could have made both the descent into the ring, and my journey back, with comparatively little effort, but I did the best I knew at the time."

"When the canon was about ten feet in width, and I had been climbing arduously for several hours, I found myself hardly more than fifteen or twenty feet above its bottom. And I was still almost that far from the top. With the stature I had then attained, I could have climbed the remaining distance easily, but for the fact that the wall above had grown too smooth to afford foothold. The effects of the drug had again worn off, and I sat down and prepared to take another dose. I did so—the smallest amount I could—and held ready in my hand a pill of the other kind in case of emergency. Steadily the walls closed in.

"A terrible feeling of dizziness now came over me. I clutched the rock beside which I was sitting, and it seemed to melt like ice beneath my grasp. Then I remembered seeing the edge of the canon within reach above my head, and with my last remaining strength, I pulled myself up, and fell upon the surface of the ring. You know the rest. I took another dose of the powder, and in a few minutes was back among you."

The Chemist stopped speaking, and looked at his friends. "Well," he said, "you've heard it all. What do you think of it?"

"It is a terrible thing to me," sighed the Very Young Man, "that you did not bring Lylda with you."

"It would have been a terrible thing if I had brought her. But I am going back for her."

"When do you plan to go back?" asked the Doctor after a moment.

"As soon as I can—in a day or two," answered the Chemist.

"Before you do your work here? You must not," remonstrated the Big Business Man. "Our war here needs you, our nation, the whole cause of liberty and freedom needs you. You cannot go."

"Lylda needs me, too," returned the Chemist. "I have an obligation toward her now, you know, quite apart from my own feelings. Understand me, gentlemen," he continued earnestly, "I do not mean to place myself and mine before the great fight for democracy and justice being waged in this world. That would be absurd. But it is not quite that way, actually; I can go back for Lylda and return here in a week. That week will make little difference to the war. On the other hand, if I go to Europe first, it may take me a good many months to complete my task, and during that time Lylda will be using up her life several times faster than I do. No, gentlemen, I am going to her first."

Two days later the company met again in the privacy of the club-room. When they had finished dinner, the Chemist began in his usual quiet way:

"I am going to ask you this time, gentlemen, to give me a full week. There are four of you—six hours a day of watching for each. It need not be too great a hardship. You see," he continued, as they nodded in agreement, "I want to spend a longer period in the ring world this time. I may never go back, and I want to learn, in the interest of science, as much about it as I can. I was there such a short time before, and it was all so strange and remarkable, I confess I learned practically nothing.

"I told you all I could of its history. But of its art, its science, and all its sociological and economic questions, I got hardly more than a glimpse. It is a world and a people far less advanced than ours, yet with something we have not, and probably never will have—the universally distributed milk of human kindness. Yes, gentlemen, it is a world well worth studying."

The Banker came out of a brown study. "How about your formulas for these drugs?" he asked abruptly; "where are they?" The Chemist tapped his forehead smilingly. "Well, hadn't you better leave them with us?" the Banker pursued. "The hazards of your trip—you can't tell, you know—"

"Don't misunderstand me, gentlemen," broke in the Chemist, "I wouldn't give you those formulas if my life and even Lylda's depended on it. There again you do not differentiate between the individual and the race. These drugs are the most powerful thing for good in the world to-day. But

they are equally as powerful for evil. I would stake my life on what you would do, but I will not stake the life of a nation."

"I know what I'd do if T had the formulas," began the Very Young Man.

"Yes, but I don't know what you'd do," laughed the Chemist. "Don't you see I'm right?"

They admitted they did, though the Banker acquiesced very grudgingly.

"The time of my departure is at hand. Is there anything else, gentlemen, before I leave you?" asked the Chemist, beginning to disrobe.

"Please tell Lylda I want very much to meet her," said the Very Young Man earnestly, and they all laughed.

When the room was cleared, and the handkerchief and the ring in place once more, the Chemist turned to them again. "Good-by, my friends," he said, holding out his hands. "One week from to-night, at most." Then he took the pills.

No unusual incident marked his departure. The last they saw of him he was sitting on the ring near the scratch.

Then passed the slow days of watching, each taking his turn for the allotted six hours.

By the fifth day, they began hourly to expect the Chemist, but it passed through its weary length, and he did not come. The sixth day dragged by, and then came the last—the day he had promised would end their watching. Still he did not come, and in the evening they gathered, and all four watched together, each unwilling to miss the return of the adventurer and his woman from another world.

But the minutes lengthened into hours, and midnight found the white-faced little group, hopeful yet hopeless, with fear tugging at their hearts. A second week passed, and still they watched, explaining with an optimism they could none of them feel, the non-appearance of their friend. At the end of the second week they met again to talk the situation over, a dull feeling of fear and horror possessing them. The Doctor was the first to voice what now each of them was forced to believe. "I guess it's all useless," he said. "He's not coming back."

"I don't hardly dare give him up," said the Big Business Man.

"Me, too," agreed the Very Young Man sadly.

The Doctor sat for some time in silence, thoughtfully regarding the ring. "My friends," he began finally, "this is too big a thing to deal with in any but the most careful way. I can't imagine what is going on inside that ring, but I do know what is happening in our world, and what our friend's return means to civilization here. Under the circumstances, therefore, I cannot, I will not give him up.

"I am going to put that ring in a museum and pay for having it watched indefinitely. Will you join me?" He turned to the Big Business Man as he spoke.

"Make it a threesome," said the Banker gruffly. "What do you take me for?" and the Very Young Man sighed with the tragedy of youth.

And so to-day, if you like, you may go and see the ring. It lies in the Museum of the American Society for Biological Research. You will find it near the center of the third gallery, lying on its black silk handkerchief, and covered by a glass bell. The air in the bell is renewed constantly, and near at hand sit two armed guards, watching day and night. And as you stand before it, thinking of the wonderful world within its atoms, you well may shudder at your infinite unimportance as an individual and yet glow with pride at your divine omnipotence as a fragment of human life.



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# THE MAD PLANET

by Murray Leinster

& Murray Leinster is a pen name for William Fitzgerald Jenkins, and the remarkable thing about the man is that he has been writing science fiction since 1919, more than fifty years, and is regarded as one of *today's* major authors in the field. He is not only one of the great names of the Munsey scientific romances but also one of the great names of modern science fiction. His earliest sale to Munsey was a two-thousand-word nonfantasy, *You Can't Get Away with It*, published in ALL-STORY WEEKLY February 2, 1918, for which he was paid fifteen dollars.

Leinster was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1896, and had one other literary figure in the family, his brother George Jenkins, better known as George Charles Jenks, who wrote some of the middle-period Nick Carter stories and was one of the editors of Street & Smith's TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE up until his untimely death at the age of forty from a burst appendix. Leinster's family tree carries him back to colonial times, and delving still further, to Leinster County in Ireland. He never got through the eighth grade of grammar school and was almost entirely self-educated.

At the age of thirteen he built a glider which won a prize from FLY magazine for its successful flight at Sandstorm Hill, Cape Henry, Virginia, in 1909. Throughout his life he has conducted a practical experimental laboratory at home, his most successful invention being the Jenkins Systems, a method for projecting backgrounds with live actors in the fore.

Murray Leinster has four daughters but since the death of his wife has lived alone at his life-long home, "Ardudwy," Gloucester, Virginia.

He still produces two science-fiction novels a year, which is minimum capacity for a man who has written in excess of fifteen hundred stories in a lifetime of authorship.

Like most literary movements, the scientific romance vogue produced much that was ephemeral, but Murray Leinster's *The Mad Planet* is a magnificent exception. Fifty years after its original appearance, it remains, as then, a superbly written romantic adventure that champions the spirit of man and incorporates fascinating philosophical insights into a theme which in the hands of someone less proficient would be permitted to deteriorate into just another monster story. It is a timeless masterpiece.

IN ALL HIS lifetime of perhaps twenty years, it had never occurred to Burl to wonder what his grandfather had thought about his surroundings. The grandfather had come to an untimely end in a rather unpleasant fashion which Burl remembered vaguely as a succession of screams coming more and more faintly to his ears while he was being carried away at the top speed of which his mother was capable.

Burl had rarely or never thought of the old gentleman since. Surely he had never wondered in the abstract of what his great grandfather thought, and most surely of all, there never entered his head such a purely hypothetical question as the one of what his many-times-great-grandfather—say of the year 1920—would have thought of the scene in which Burl found himself.

He was treading cautiously over a brownish carpet of fungus growth, creeping furtively toward the stream which he knew by the generic title of "water." It was the only water he knew. Towering far above his head, three man-heights high, great toadstools hid the grayish sky from his sight. Clinging to the foot-thick stalks of the toadstools were still other fungi, parasites upon the growth that had once been parasites themselves.

Burl himself was a slender young man wearing a single garment twisted about his waist, made from the wing-fabric of a great moth the members of his tribe had slain as it emerged from its cocoon. His skin was fair, without a trace of sunburn. In all his lifetime he had never seen the sun, though the sky was rarely hidden from view save by the giant fungi which, with monster cabbages, were the only growing things he knew. Clouds usually spread overhead, and when they did not, the perpetual haze made the sun but an indefinitely brighter part of the sky, never a sharply edged ball of fire. Fantastic mosses, misshapen fungus growths, colossal molds and yeasts, were the essential parts of the landscape through which he moved.

Once as he had dodged through the forest of huge toadstools, his shoulder touched a cream-colored stalk, giving the whole fungus a tiny

shock. Instantly, from the umbrella-like mass of pulp overhead, a fine and impalpable powder fell upon him like snow. It was the season when the toadstools sent out their spores, or seeds, and they had been dropped upon him at the first sign of disturbance.

Furtive as he was, he paused to brush them from his head and hair. They were deadly poison, as he knew well.

Burl would have been a curious sight to a man of the twentieth century. His skin was pink, like that of a child, and there was but little hair upon his body. Even that on top of his head was soft and downy. His chest was larger than his forefathers' had been, and his ears seemed almost capable of independent movement, to catch threatening sounds from any direction. His eyes, large and blue, possessed pupils which could dilate to extreme size, allowing him to see in almost complete darkness.

He was the result of the thirty thousand years' attempt of the human race to adapt itself to the change that had begun in the latter half of the twentieth century.

At about that time, civilization had been high, and apparently secure. Mankind had reached a permanent agreement among itself, and all men had equal opportunities to education and leisure. Machinery did most of the labor of the world, and men were only required to supervise its operation. All men were well-fed, all men were well-educated, and it seemed that until the end of time the earth would be the abode of a community of comfortable human beings, pursuing their studies and diversions, their illusions and their truths. Peace, quietness, privacy, freedom were universal.

Then, just when men were congratulating themselves that the Golden Age had come again, it was observed that the planet seemed ill at ease. Fissures opened slowly in the crust, and carbonic acid gas—the carbon dioxide of chemists—began to pour out into the atmosphere. That gas had long been known to be present in the air, and was considered necessary to plant life. Most of the plants of the world took the gas and absorbed its carbon into themselves, releasing the oxygen for use again.

Scientists had calculated that a great deal of the earth's increased fertility was due to the larger quantities of carbon dioxide released by the activities of man in burning his coal and petroleum. Because of those views, for some years no great alarm was caused by the continuous exhalation from the world's interior.

Constantly, however, the volume increased. New fissures constantly opened, each one adding a new source of carbon dioxide, and each one pouring into the already laden atmosphere more of the gas—beneficent in small quantities, but as the world learned, deadly in large ones.

The percentage of the heavy, vapor-like gas increased. The whole body of the air became heavier through its admixture. It absorbed more moisture and became more humid. Rainfall increased. Climates grew warmer. Vegetation became more luxuriant—but the air gradually became less exhilarating.

Soon the health of mankind began to be affected. Accustomed through long ages to breathe air rich in oxygen and poor in carbon dioxide, men suffered. Only those who lived on high plateaus or on tall mountaintops remained unaffected. The plants of the earth, though nourished and increasing in size beyond those ever seen before, were unable to dispose of the continually increasing flood of carbon dioxide.

By the middle of the twenty-first century it was generally recognized that a new carboniferous period was about to take place, when the earth's atmosphere would be thick and humid, unbreathable by man, when giant grasses and ferns would form the only vegetation.

When the twenty-first century drew to a close the whole human race began to revert to conditions closely approximating savagery. The lowlands were unbearable. Thick jungles of rank growth covered the ground. The air was depressing and enervating. Men could live there, but it was a sickly, fever-ridden existence. The whole population of the earth desired the high lands and as the low country became more unbearable, men forgot their two centuries of peace.

They fought destructively, each for a bit of land where he might live and breathe. Then men began to die, men who had persisted in remaining near sea-level. They could not live in the poisonous air. The danger zone crept up as the earth-fissures tirelessly poured out their steady streams of foul gas. Soon men could not live within five hundred feet of sea level. The lowlands went uncultivated, and became jungles of a thickness comparable only to those of the first carboniferous period.

Then men died of sheer inanition at a thousand feet. The plateaus and mountaintops were crowded with folk struggling for a foothold and food beyond the invisible menace that crept up, and up—

These things did not take place in one year, or in ten. Not in one generation, but in several. Between the time when the chemists of the International Geophysical Institute announced that the proportion of carbon dioxide in the air had increased from .04 per cent to .1 per cent and the time when at sea-level six per cent of the atmosphere was the deadly gas, more than two hundred years intervened.

Coming gradually, as it did, the poisonous effects of the deadly stuff increased with insidious slowness. First the lassitude, then the heavi-

ness of brain, then the weakness of body. Mankind ceased to grow in numbers. After a long period, the race had fallen to a fraction of its former size. There was room in plenty on the mountaintops—but the danger-level continued to creep up.

There was but one solution. The human body would have to inure itself to the poison, or it was doomed to extinction. It finally developed a toleration for the gas that had wiped out race after race and nation after nation, but at a terrible cost. Lungs increased in size to secure the oxygen on which life depended, but the poison, inhaled at every breath, left the few survivors sickly and filled with a perpetual weariness. Their minds lacked the energy to cope with new problems or transmit the knowledge which in one degree or another, they possessed.

And after thirty thousand years, Burl, a direct descendant of the first president of the Universal Republic, crept through a forest of toadstools and fungus growths. He was ignorant of fire, or metals, of the uses of stone and wood. A single garment covered him. His language was a scanty group of a few hundred labial sounds, conveying no abstractions and few concrete things.

He was ignorant of the uses of wood. There was no wood in the scanty territory furtively inhabited by his tribe. With the increase in heat and humidity the trees had begun to die out. Those of northern climes went first, the oaks, the cedars, the maples. Then the pines—the beeches went early—the cypresses, and finally even the forests of the jungles vanished. Only grasses and reeds, bamboos and their kin, were able to flourish in the new, steaming atmosphere. The thick jungles gave place to dense thickets of grasses and ferns, now become treeferns again.

And then the fungi took their place. Flourishing as never before, flourishing on a planet of torrid heat and perpetual miasma, on whose surface the sun never shone directly because of an ever-thickening bank of clouds that hung sullenly overhead, the fungi sprang up. About the dank pools that festered over the surface of the earth, fungus growths began to cluster. Of every imaginable shade and color, of all monstrous forms and malignant purposes, of huge size and flabby volume, they spread over the land.

The grasses and ferns gave place to them. Squat footstools, flaking molds, evil-smelling yeasts, vast mounds of fungi inextricably mingled as to species, but growing, forever growing and exhaling an odor of dark places.

The strange growths now grouped themselves in forests, horrible travesties on the vegetation they had succeeded. They grew and grew with feverish intensity beneath a clouded or a haze-obscured sky, while above

them fluttered gigantic butterflies and huge moths, sipping daintily of their corruption.

The insects alone of all the animal world above water, were able to endure the change. They multiplied exceedingly, and enlarged themselves in the thickened air. The solitary vegetation—as distinct from fungus growths—that had survived, was now a degenerate form of the cabbages that had once fed peasants. On those rank, colossal masses of foliage, the stolid grubs and caterpillars ate themselves to maturity, then swung below in strong cocoons to sleep the sleep of metamorphosis from which they emerged to spread their wings and fly.

The tiniest butterflies of former days had increased their span until their gaily colored wings should be described in terms of feet, while the larger emperor moths extended their purple sails to a breadth of yards upon yards. Burl himself would have been dwarfed beneath the overshadowing fabric of their wings.

It was fortunate that they, the largest flying creatures, were harmless or nearly so. Burl's fellow tribesmen sometimes came upon a cocoon just about to open, and waited patiently beside it until the beautiful creature within broke through its matted shell and came out into the sunlight.

Then, before it had gathered energy from the air, and before its wings had swelled to strength and firmness, the tribesmen fell upon it, tearing the filmy, delicate wings from its body and the limbs from its carcass. Then, when it lay helpless before them, they carried away the juicy, meat-filled limbs to be eaten, leaving the still living body to stare helplessly at this strange world through its many faceted eyes, and become a prey to the voracious ants who would soon clamber upon it and carry it away in tiny fragments to their underground city.

Not all the insect world was so helpless or so unthreatening. Burl knew of wasps almost the length of his own body who possessed stings that were instantly fatal. To every species of wasp, however, some other insect is predestined prey, and the furtive members of Burl's tribe feared them but little as they sought only the prey to which their instinct led them.

Bees were similarly aloof. They were hard put to it for existence, those bees. Few flowers bloomed, and they were reduced to expedients once considered signs of degeneracy in their race. Bubbling yeasts and fouler things, occasionally the nectarless blooms of the rank, giant cabbages. Burl knew the bees. They droned overhead, nearly as large as he was himself, their bulging eyes gazing at him with abstracted preoccupation. And crickets, and beetles, and spiders—

Burl knew spiders! His grandfather had been the prey of one of the hunting tarantulas, which had leaped with incredible ferocity from his excavated tunnel in the earth. A vertical pit in the ground, two feet in diameter, went down for twenty feet. At the bottom of that lair the black-bellied monster waited for the tiny sounds that would warn him of prey approaching his hiding-place (*Lycosa fasciata*).

Burl's grandfather had been careless, and the terrible shrieks he uttered as the horrible monster darted from the pit and seized him had lingered vaguely in Burl's mind ever since. Burl had seen, too, the monster webs of another species of spider, and watched from a safe distance as the misshapen body of the huge creature sucked the juices from a three-foot cricket that had become entangled in its trap.

Burl had remembered the strange stripes of yellow and black and silver that crossed upon its abdomen (*Epiura fasciata*). He had been fascinated by the struggles of the imprisoned insect, coiled in a hopeless tangle of sticky, gummy ropes the thickness of Burl's finger, cast about its body before the spider made any attempt to approach.

Burl knew these dangers. They were a part of his life. It was his accustomedness to them, and that of his ancestors, that made his existence possible. He was able to evade them; so he survived. A moment of carelessness, an instant's relaxation of his habitual caution, and he would be one with his forebears, forgotten meals of long-dead, inhuman monsters.

Three days before, Burl had crouched behind a bulky, shapeless fungus growth while he watched a furious duel between two huge horned beetles. Their jaws, gaping wide, clicked and clashed upon each other's impenetrable armor. Their legs crashed like so many cymbals as their polished surfaces ground and struck against each other. They were fighting over some particularly attractive bit of carrion.

Burl had watched with all his eyes until a gaping orifice appeared in the armor of the smaller of the two. It uttered a shrill cry, or seemed to cry out. The noise was, actually, the tearing of the horny stuff beneath the victorious jaws of the adversary.

The wounded beetle struggled more and more feebly. At last it collapsed, and the conqueror placidly began to eat the conquered before life was extinct.

Burl waited until the meal was finished, and then approached the scene with caution. An ant—the forerunner of many—was already inspecting the carcass.

Burl usually ignored the ants. They were stupid, short-sighted insects, and not hunters. Save when attacked, they offered no injury. They were scavengers, on the lookout for the dead and dying, but they would

fight viciously if their prey were questioned, and they were dangerous opponents. They were from three inches, for the tiny black ants, to a foot for the large termites.

Burl was hasty when he heard the tiny clickings of their limbs as they approached. He seized the sharp-pointed snout of the victim, detached from the body, and fled from the scene.

Later, he inspected his find with curiosity. The smaller victim had been a minotaur beetle, with a sharp-pointed horn like that of a rhinoceros to reinforce his offensive armament, already dangerous because of his wide jaws. The jaws of a beetle work from side to side, instead of up and down, and this had made the protection complete in no less than three directions.

Burl inspected the sharp, dagger-like instrument in his hand. He felt its point, and it pricked his finger. He flung it aside as he crept to the hiding-place of his tribe. There were only twenty of them, four or five men, six or seven women, and the rest girls and children.

Burl had been wondering at the strange feelings that came over him when he looked at one of the girls. She was younger than Burl—perhaps eighteen—and fleeter of foot than he. They talked together, sometimes, and once or twice Burl shared with her an especially succulent find of foodstuffs.

The next morning he found the horn where he had thrown it, sticking in the flabby side of a toadstool. He pulled it out, and gradually, far back in his mind, an idea began to take shape. He sat for some time with the thing in his hand, considering it with a far-away look in his eyes. From time to time he stabbed at a toadstool, awkwardly, but with gathering skill. His imagination began to work fitfully. He visualized himself stabbing food with it as the larger beetle had stabbed the former owner of the weapon he had in his hand.

Burl could not imagine himself coping with one of the fighting insects. He could only picture himself, dimly, stabbing something that was food with this death-dealing thing. It was no longer than his arm and though clumsy to the hand, an effective and terribly sharp implement.

He thought: Where was there food, food that lived, that would not fight back? Presently he rose and began to make his way toward the tiny river. Yellow-bellied newts swam in its waters. The swimming larvae of a thousand insects floated about its surface or crawled upon its bottom.

There were deadly things there, too. Giant crayfish snapped their horny claws at the unwary. Mosquitoes of four-inch wing-spread sometimes made their humming way above the river. The last survivors of their race, they were dying out for lack of the plant-juices on which the male



of the species lived, but even so they were formidable. Burl had learned to crush them with fragments of fungus.

He crept slowly through the forest of toadstools. Brownish fungus was underfoot. Strange orange, red, and purple molds clustered about the bases of the creamy toadstool stalks. Once Burl paused to run his sharp-pointed weapon through a fleshy stalk and reassure himself that what he planned was practicable.

He made his way furtively through the forest of misshapen growths. Once he heard a tiny clicking, and froze into stillness. It was a troop of four or five ants, each some eight inches long, returning along their habitual pathway to their city. They moved sturdily, heavily laden, along the route marked with the black and odorous formic acid exuded from the bodies of their comrades. Burl waited until they had passed, then went on.

He came to the bank of the river. Green scum covered a great deal of its surface, scum occasionally broken by a slowly enlarging bubble of some gas released from decomposing matter on the bottom. In the center of the placid stream the current ran a little more swiftly, and the water itself was visible.

Over the shining current, water-spiders ran swiftly. They had not shared in the general increase of size that had taken place in the insect world. Depending upon the capillary qualities of the water to support them, an increase in size and weight would have deprived them of the means of locomotion.

From the spot where Burl first peered at the water the green scum spread out for many yards into the stream. He could not see what swam and wriggled and crawled beneath the evil-smelling covering. He peered up and down the banks.

Perhaps a hundred and fifty yards below, the current came near the shore. An outcropping of rock there made a steep descent to the river, from which yellow shelf-fungi stretched out. Dark red and orange above, they were light yellow below, and they formed a series of platforms above the smoothly flowing stream. Burl made his way cautiously toward them.

On his way he saw one of the edible mushrooms that formed so large a part of his diet, and paused to break from the flabby flesh an amount that would feed him for many days. It was too often the custom of his people to find a store of food, carry it to their hiding place, and then gorge themselves for days, eating, sleeping, and waking only to eat again until the food was gone.

Absorbed as he was in his plan of trying his new weapon, Burl was tempted to return with his booty. He would give Saya of this food, and

they would eat together. Saya was the maiden who roused unusual emotions in Burl. He felt strange impulses stirring within him when she was near, a desire to touch her, to caress her. He did not understand.

He went on, after hesitating. If he brought her food, Saya would be pleased, but if he brought her of the things that swam in the stream, she would be still more pleased. Degraded as his tribe had become, Burl was yet a little more intelligent than they. He was an atavism, a throwback to ancestors who had cultivated the earth and subjugated its animals. He had a vague idea of pride, unformed but potent.

No man within memory had hunted or slain for food. They knew of meat, yes, but it had been the fragments left by an insect hunter, seized and carried away by the men before the perpetually alert ant colonies had sent their foragers to the scene.

If Burl did what no man before him had done, if he brought a whole carcass to his tribe, they would envy him. They were preoccupied solely with their stomachs, and after that with the preservation of their lives. The perpetuation of the race came third in their consideration.

They were herded together in a leaderless group, coming to the same hiding place that they might share in the finds of the lucky and gather comfort from their numbers. Of weapons, they had none. They sometimes used stones to crack open the limbs of the huge insects they found partly devoured, cracking them open for the sweet meat to be found inside, but they sought safety from their enemies solely in flight and hiding.

Their enemies were not as numerous as might have been imagined. Most of the meat-eating insects have their allotted prey. The sphex—a hunting wasp—feeds solely upon grasshoppers. Others wasps eat flies only. The pirate-bee eats bumblebees only. Spiders were the principal enemies of man, as they devour with a terrifying impartiality all that falls into their clutches.

Burl reached the spot from which he might gaze down into the water. He lay prostrate, staring into the shallow depths. Once a huge crayfish, as long as Burl's body, moved leisurely across his vision. Small fishes and even the huge newts fled before the voracious creature.

After a long time the tide of underwater life resumed its activity. The wriggling grubs of the dragonflies reappeared. Little flecks of silver swam into view—a school of tiny fish. A larger fish appeared, moving slowly through the water.

Burl's eyes glistened and his mouth watered. He reached down with his long weapon. It barely touched the water. Disappointment filled him, yet the nearness and the apparent practicability of his scheme spurred him on.

He considered the situation. There were the shelf-fungi below him. He rose and moved to a point just above them, then thrust his spear down. They resisted its point. Burl felt them tentatively with his foot, then dared to thrust his weight to them. They held him firmly. He clambered down and lay flat upon them, peering over the edge as before.

The large fish, as long as Burl's arm, swam slowly to and fro below him. Burl had seen the former owner of his spear strive to thrust it into his opponents, and knew that a thrust was necessary. He had tried his weapon upon toadstools—had practiced with it. When the fish swam below him, he thrust sharply downward. The spear seemed to bend when it entered the water, and missed its mark by inches, to Burl's astonishment. He tried again and again.

He grew angry with the fish below him for eluding his efforts to kill it. Repeated strokes had left it untouched, and it was unwary, and did not even try to run away.

Burl became furious. The big fish came to rest directly beneath his hand. Burl thrust downward with all his strength. This time the spear, entering vertically, did not seem to bend. It went straight down. Its point penetrated the scales of the swimmer below, transfixing that lazy fish completely.

An uproar began. The fish, struggling to escape, and Burl, trying to draw it up to his perch, made a huge commotion. In his excitement Burl did not observe a tiny ripple some distance away. The monster crayfish was attracted by the disturbance, and was approaching.

The unequal combat continued. Burl hung on desperately to the end of his spear. Then there was a tremor in Burl's support, it gave way, and fell into the stream with a mighty splash. Burl went under, his eyes open, facing death. And as he sank, his wide-open eyes saw waved before him the gaping claws of the huge crayfish, large enough to sever a limb with a single stroke of their jagged jaws.

He opened his mouth to scream—a replica of the terrible screams of his grandfather, seized by a black-bellied tarantula years before—but no sound came forth. Only bubbles floated to the surface of the water. He beat the unresisting fluid with his hands—he did not know how to swim. The colossal creature approached leisurely, while Burl struggled helplessly.

His arms struck a solid object, and grasped it convulsively. A second later he had swung it between himself and the huge crustacean. He felt a shock as the mighty jaws closed upon the corklike fungus, then felt himself drawn upward as the crayfish released his hold and the shelf-fungus floated to the surface. Having given way beneath him, it had

been carried below him in his fall, only to rise within his reach just when most needed.

Burl's head popped above water and he saw a larger bit of the fungus floating near by. Less securely anchored to the rocks of the river bank than the shelf to which Burl had trusted himself, it had been dislodged when the first shelf gave way. It was larger than the fragment to which Burl clung, and floated higher in the water.

Burl was cool with a terrible self-possession. He seized it and struggled to draw himself on top of it. It tilted as his weight came upon it, and nearly overturned, but he paid no heed. With desperate haste, he clawed with hands and feet until he could draw himself clear of the water, of which he would forever retain a slight fear.

As he pulled himself upon the furry, orange-brown upper surface, a sharp blow struck his foot. The crayfish, disgusted at finding only what was to it a tasteless morsel in the shelf-fungus, had made a languid stroke at Burl's wriggling foot in the water. Failing to grasp the fleshy member, the crayfish retreated, disgruntled and annoyed.

And Burl floated downstream, perched, weaponless and alone, frightened and in constant danger, upon a flimsy raft composed of a degenerate fungus floating soggily in the water. He floated slowly down the stream of a river in whose waters death lurked unseen, upon whose banks was peril, and above whose reaches danger fluttered on golden wings.

It was a long time before he recovered his self-possession, and when he did he looked first for his spear. It was floating in the water, still transfixing the fish whose capture had endangered Burl's life. The fish now floated with its belly upward, all life gone.

So insistent was Burl's instinct for food that his predicament was forgotten when he saw his prey just out of his reach. He gazed at it, and his mouth watered, while his cranky craft went downstream, spinning slowly in the current. He lay flat on the floating fungoid, and strove to reach out and grasp the end of the spear.

The raft tilted and nearly flung him overboard again. A little later he discovered that it sank more readily on one side than on the other. That was due, of course, to the greater thickness—and consequently greater buoyancy—of the part which had grown next the rocks of the river bank.

Burl found that if he lay with his head stretching above that side, it did not sink into the water. He wriggled into this new position, then, and waited until the slow revolution of his vessel brought the spear-shaft near him. He stretched his fingers and his arm, and touched, then grasped it.

A moment later he was tearing strips of flesh from the side of the fish and cramming the oily mess into his mouth with great enjoyment. He had lost his edible mushroom. That danced upon the waves several yards away, but Burl ate contentedly of what he possessed. He did not worry about what was before him. That lay in the future, but suddenly he realized that he was being carried farther and farther from Saya, the maiden of his tribe who caused strange bliss to steal over him when he contemplated her.

The thought came to him when he visualized the delight with which she would receive a gift of part of the fish he had caught. He was suddenly stricken with dumb sorrow. He lifted his head and looked longingly at the river banks.

A long, monotonous row of strangely colored fungus growths. No healthy green, but pallid, cream-colored toadstools, some bright orange, lavender, and purple molds, vivid carmine "rusts" and mildews, spreading up the banks from the turgid slime. The sun was not a ball of fire, but merely shone as a bright golden patch in the haze-filled sky, a patch whose limits could not be defined or marked.

In the faintly pinkish light that filtered down through the air, a multitude of flying objects could be seen. Now and then a cricket or a grasshopper made its bullet-like flight from one spot to another. Huge butterflies fluttered gayly above the silent, seemingly lifeless world. Bees lumbered anxiously about, seeking the cross-shaped flowers of the monster cabbages. Now and then a slender-waisted, yellow-stomached wasp flew alertly through the air.

Burl watched them with a strange indifference. The wasps were as long as he himself. The bees, on end, could match his height. The butterflies ranged from tiny creatures barely capable of shading his face to colossal things in the folds of whose wings he could have been lost. And above him fluttered dragonflies, whose long, spindle-like bodies were three times the length of his own.

Burl ignored them all. Sitting there, an incongruous creature of pink skin and soft brown hair upon an orange fungus floating in midstream, he was filled with despondency because the current carried him forever farther and farther from a certain slender-limbed maiden of his tiny tribe, whose glances caused an odd commotion in his breast.

The day went on. Once, Burl saw upon the blue-green mold that spread upward from the river, a band of large, red Amazon ants, marching in orderly array, to raid the city of a colony of black ants, and carry away the eggs they would find there. The eggs would be hatched,

and the small black creatures made the slaves of the brigands who had stolen them.

The Amazon ants can live only by the labor of their slaves, and for that reason are mighty warriors in their world. Later, etched against the steaming mist that overhung everything as far as the eye could reach, Burl saw strangely shaped, swollen branches rearing themselves from the ground. He knew what they were. A hard-rinded fungus that grew upon itself in peculiar mockery of the vegetation that had vanished from the earth.

And again he saw pear-shaped objects above some of which floated little clouds of smoke. They, too, were fungus growths, puffballs, which when touched emit what seems a puff of vapor. These would have towered above Burl's head, had he stood beside them.

And then, as the day drew to an end, he saw in the distance what seemed a range of purple hills. They were tall hills to Burl, some sixty or seventy feet high, and they seemed to be the agglomeration of a formless growth, multiplying its organisms and forms upon itself until the whole formed an irregular, cone-shaped mound. Burl watched them apathetically.

Presently, he ate again of the oily fish. The taste was pleasant to him, accustomed to feed mostly upon insipid mushrooms. He stuffed himself, though the size of his prey left by far the larger part uneaten.

He still held his spear firmly beside him.

It had brought him into trouble, but Burl possessed a fund of obstinacy. Unlike most of his tribe, he associated the spear with the food it had secured, rather than the difficulty into which it had led him. When he had eaten his fill he picked it up and examined it again. The sharpness of its point was unimpaired.

Burl handled it meditatively, debating whether or not to attempt to fish again. The shakiness of his little raft dissuaded him, and he abandoned the idea. Presently he stripped a sinew from the garment about his middle and hung the fish about his neck with it. That would leave him both hands free. Then he sat cross-legged upon the soggily floating fungus, like a pink-skinned Buddha, and watched the shores go by.

Time had passed, and it was drawing near sunset. Burl, never having seen the sun save as a bright spot in the overhanging haze, did not think of the coming of night as "sunset." To him it was the letting down of darkness from the sky.

Today happened to be an exceptionally bright day, and the haze was not as thick as usual. Far to the west, the thick mist turned to gold, while the thicker clouds above became blurred masses of dull red. Their shadows seemed like lavender, from the contrast of shades. Upon the

still surface of the river, all the myriad tints and shadings were reflected with an incredible faithfulness, and the shining tops of the giant mushrooms by the river brim glowed faintly pink.

Dragonflies buzzed over his head in their swift and angular flight, the metallic luster of their bodies glistening in the rosy light. Great yellow butterflies flew lightly above the stream. Here, there, and everywhere upon the water appeared the shell-formed boats of a thousand caddis flies, floating upon the surface while they might.

Burl could have thrust his hand down into their cavities and seized the white worms that inhabited the strange craft. The huge bulk of a tardy bee droned heavily overhead. Burl glanced upward and saw the long proboscis and the hairy hinder legs with their scanty load of pollen. He saw the great, multiple-lensed eyes with their expression of stupid preoccupation, and even the sting that would mean death alike for him and for the giant insect, should it be used.

The crimson radiance grew dim at the edge of the world. The purple hills had long been left behind. Now the slender stalks of ten thousand round-domed mushrooms lined the river bank and beneath them spread fungi of all colors, from the rawest red to palest blue, but all now fading slowly to a monochromatic background in the growing dusk.

The buzzing, fluttering, and the flapping of the insects of the day died slowly down, while from a million hiding places there crept out into the deep night soft and furry bodies of great moths, who preened themselves and smoothed their feathery antennae before taking to the air. The strong-limbed crickets set up their thunderous noise—grown gravely bass with the increasing size of the organs by which the sound was made—and then there began to gather on the water those slender spirals of tenuous mist that would presently blanket the stream in a mantle of thin fog.

Night fell. The clouds above seemed to lower and grow dark. Gradually, now a drop and then a drop, now a drop and then a drop, the languid fall of large, warm raindrops that would drip from the moisture-laden skies all through the night began. The edge of the stream became a place where great disks of coolly glowing flame appeared.

The mushrooms that bordered on the river were faintly phosphorescent (*Pleurotus phosphoreus*) and shone coldly upon the "rusts" and flake-fungi beneath their feet. Here and there a ball of lambent flame appeared, drifting idly above the steaming, festering earth.

Thirty thousand years before, men had called them "will-o'-the-wisps," but Burl simply stared at them, accepting them as he accepted all that passed. Only a man attempting to advance in the scale of civilization

tries to explain everything that he sees. The savage and the child is most often content to observe without comment, unless he repeats the legends told him by wise folk who are possessed by the itch of knowledge.

Burl watched for a long time. Great fireflies whose beacons lighted up their surroundings for many yards—fireflies Burl knew to be as long as his spear—shed their intermittent glows upon the stream. Softly fluttering wings, in great beats that poured torrents of air upon him, passed above Burl.

The air was full of winged creatures. The night was broken by their cries, by the sound of their invisible wings, by their cries of anguish and their mating calls. Above him and on all sides the persistent, intense life of the insect world went on ceaselessly, but Burl rocked back and forth upon his frail mushroom boat and wished to weep because he was being carried from his tribe, and from Saya—Saya of the swift feet and white teeth, of the shy smile.

Burl may have been homesick, but his principal thoughts were of Saya. He had dared greatly to bring a gift of fresh meat to her, meat captured as meat had never been known to be taken by a member of the tribe. And now he was being carried from her!

He lay, disconsolate, upon his floating atom on the water for a great part of the night. It was long after midnight when the mushroom raft struck gently and remained grounded upon a shallow in the stream.

When the light came in the morning, Burl gazed about him keenly. He was some twenty yards from the shore, and the greenish scum surrounded his now disintegrating vessel. The river had widened out until the other bank was barely to be seen through the haze above the surface of the river, but the nearer shore seemed firm and no more full of dangers than the territory his tribe inhabited. He felt the depth of the water with his spear, then was struck with the multiple usefulness of that weapon. The water would come to but slightly above his ankles.

Shivering a little with fear, Burl stepped down into the water, then made for the bank at the top of his speed. He felt a soft something clinging to one of his bare feet. With an access of terror, he ran faster, and stumbled upon the shore in a panic. He stared down at his foot. A shapeless, flesh-colored pad clung to his heel, and as Burl watched, it began to swell slowly, while the pink of its wrinkled folds deepened.

It was no more than a leech, sharing in the enlargement nearly all the lower world had undergone, but Burl did not know that. He thrust at it with the side of his spear, then scraped frantically at it, and it fell off, leaving a blotch of blood upon the skin where it came away. It lay, writhing and pulsating, upon the ground, and Burl fled from it.

He found himself in one of the toadstool forests with which he was



familiar, and finally paused, disconsolately. He knew the nature of the fungus growths about him, and presently fell to eating. In Burl the sight of food always produced hunger—a wise provision of nature to make up for the instinct to store food, which he lacked.

Burl's heart was small within him. He was far from his tribe, and far from Saya. In the parlance of this day, it is probable that no more than forty miles separated them, but Burl did not think of distances. He had come down the river. He was in a land he had never known or seen. And he was alone.

All about him was food. All the mushrooms that surrounded him were edible, and formed a store of sustenance Burl's whole tribe could not have eaten in many days, but that very fact brought Saya to his mind more forcibly. He squatted on the ground, wolfing down the insipid mushroom in great gulps, when an idea suddenly came to him with all the force of inspiration.

He would bring Saya here, where there was food, food in great quantities, and she would be pleased. Burl had forgotten the large and oily fish that still hung down his back from the sinew about his neck, but now he rose, and its flapping against him reminded him again.

He took it and fingered it all over, getting his hands and himself thoroughly greasy in the process, but he could eat no more. The thought of Saya's pleasure at the sight of that, too, reinforced his determination.

With all the immediacy of a child or a savage he set off at once. He had come along the bank of the stream. He would retrace his steps along the bank of the stream.

Through the awkward aisles of the mushroom forest he made his way, eyes and ears open for possibilities of danger. Several times he heard the omnipresent clicking of ants on their multifarious businesses in the wood, but he could afford to ignore them. They were short-sighted at best, and at worst they were foragers rather than hunters. He only feared one kind of ant, the army-ant, which sometimes travels in hordes of millions, eating all that it comes upon. In ages past, when they were tiny creatures not an inch long, even the largest animals fled from them. Now that they measured a foot in length, not even the gorged spiders whose distended bellies were a yard in thickness, dared offer them battle.

The mushroom forest came to an end. A cheerful grasshopper (*Ephigger*) munched delicately at some dainty it had found. Its hind legs were bunched beneath it in perpetual readiness for flight. A monster wasp appeared above—as long as Burl himself—poised an instant, dropped, and seized the luckless feaster.

There was a struggle, then the grasshopper became helpless, and the wasp's flexible abdomen curved delicately. Its sting entered the

jointed armor of its prey, just beneath the head. The sting entered with all the deliberate precision of a surgeon's scalpel, and all struggle ceased.

The wasp grasped the paralyzed, not dead, insect and flew away. Burl grunted, and passed on. He had hidden when the wasp darted down from above.

The ground grew rough, and Burl's progress became painful. He clambered arduously up steep slopes and made his way cautiously down their farther sides. Once he had to climb through a tangled mass of mushrooms so closely placed, and so small, that he had to break them apart with blows of his spear before he could pass, when they shed upon him torrents of a fiery red liquid that rolled off his greasy breast and sank into the ground (*Lactarius deliciosus*).

A strange self-confidence now took possession of Burl. He walked less cautiously and more boldly. The mere fact that he had struck something and destroyed it provided him with a curious fictitious courage.

He had climbed slowly to the top of a red clay cliff, perhaps a hundred feet high, slowly eaten away by the river when it overflowed. Burl could see the river. At some past floodtime it had lapped at the base of the cliff on whose edge he walked, though now it came no nearer than a quarter-mile.

The cliffside was almost covered with shelf-fungi, large and small, white, yellow, orange, and green, in indescribable confusion and luxuriance. From a point halfway up the cliff the inch-thick cable of a spider's web stretched down to an anchorage on the ground, and the strangely geometrical pattern of the web glistened evilly.

Somewhere among the fungi of the cliffside the huge creature waited until some unfortunate prey should struggle helplessly in its monster snare. The spider waited in a motionless, implacable patience, invincibly certain of prey, utterly merciless to its victims.

Burl strutted on the edge of the cliff, a silly little pink-skinned creature with an oily fish slung about his neck and a draggled fragment of a moth's wing about his middle. In his hand he bore the long spear of a minotaur beetle. He strutted, and looked scornfully down upon the whitely shining trap below him. He struck mushrooms, and they had fallen before him. He feared nothing. He strode fearlessly along. He would go to Saya and bring her to this land where food grew in abundance.

Sixty paces before him, a shaft sank vertically in the sandy, clayey soil. It was a carefully rounded shaft, and lined with silk. It went down for perhaps thirty feet or more, and there enlarged itself into a chamber where the owner and digger of the shaft might rest. The top of the hole was closed by a trap door, stained with mud and earth to imitate with

precision the surrounding soil. A keen eye would have been needed to perceive the opening. But a keen eye now peered out from a tiny crack, the eye of the engineer of the underground dwelling.

Eight hairy legs surrounded the body of the creature that hung motionless at the top of the silk-lined shaft. A huge misshapen globe formed its body, colored a dirty brown. Two pairs of ferocious mandibles stretched before its fierce mouth-parts. Two eyes glittered evilly in the darkness of the burrow. And over the whole body spread a rough, mangy fur.

It was a thing of implacable malignance, of incredible ferocity. It was the brown hunting-spider, the American tarantula (*Mygale Hentzii*). Its body was two feet and more in diameter, and its legs, outstretched, would cover a circle three yards across. It watched Burl, its eyes glistening. Slaver welled up and dropped from its jaws.

And Burl strutted forward on the edge of the cliff, puffed up with a sense of his own importance. The white snare of the spinning spider below him impressed him as amusing. He knew the spider would not leave its web to attack him. He reached down and broke off a bit of fungus growing at his feet. Where he broke it, it was oozing a soupy liquid and was full of tiny maggots in a delirium of feasting. Burl flung it down into the web, and then laughed as the black bulk of the hidden spider swung down from its hiding place to investigate.

The tarantula, peering from its burrow, quivered with impatience. Burl drew near, and nearer. He was using his spear as a lever, now, and prying off bits of fungus to fall down the cliffside into the colossal web. The spider, below, went leisurely from one place to another, investigating each new missile with its palpi, then leaving them, as they appeared lifeless and undesirable prey. Burl laughed again as a particularly large lump of shelf-fungus narrowly missed the black-and-silver figure below. Then—

The trap door fell into place with a faint click, and Burl whirled about. His laughter turned to a scream. Moving toward him with incredible rapidity, the monster tarantula opened its dripping jaws. Its mandibles gaped wide. The poison fangs were unsheathed. The creature was thirty paces away, twenty paces—ten. It leaped into the air, eyes glittering, all its eight legs extended to seize, fangs bared—

Burl screamed again, and thrust out his arms to ward off the impact of the leap. In his terror, his grasp upon his spear had become agonized. The spear point shot out, and the tarantula fell upon it. Nearly a quarter of the spear entered the body of the ferocious thing.

It struck upon the spear, writhing horribly, still struggling to reach Burl, who was transfixed with horror. The mandibles clashed, strange

sounds came from the beast. Then one of the attenuated, hairy legs rasped across Burl's forearm. He gasped in ultimate fear and stepped backward—and the edge of the cliff gave way beneath him.

He hurtled downward, still clutching the spear which led the writhing creature from him. Down through space, eyes glassy with panic, the two creatures—the man and the giant tarantula—fell together. There was a strangely elastic crash and crackling. They had fallen into the web beneath them.

Burl had reached the end of terror. He could be no more fear-struck. Struggling madly in the gummy coils of an immense web, which ever bound him more tightly, with a wounded creature shuddering in agony not a yard from him—yet a wounded creature that still strove to reach him with its poison fangs—Burl had reached the limit of panic.

He fought like a madman to break the coils about him. His arms and breast were greasy from the oily fish, and the sticky web did not adhere to them, but his legs and body were inextricably fastened by the elastic threads spread for just such prey as he.

He paused a moment, in exhaustion. Then he saw, five yards away, the silvery and black monster waiting patiently for him to weary himself. It judged the moment propitious. The tarantula and the man were one in its eyes, one struggling thing that had fallen opportunely into its snare. They were moving but feebly now. The spider advanced delicately, swinging its huge bulk nimbly along the web, paying out a cable after it came inexorably toward him.

Burl's arms were free, because of the greasy coating they had received. He waved them wildly, shrieking at the pitiless monster that approached. The spider paused. Those moving arms suggested mandibles that might wound or slap.

Spiders take few hazards. This spider was no exception to the rule. It drew cautiously near, then stopped. Its spinnerets became busy, and with one of its six legs, used like an arm, it flung a sheet of gummy silk impartially over both the tarantula and the man.

Burl fought against the descending shroud. He strove to thrust it away, but in vain. In a matter of minutes he was completely covered in a silken cloth that hid even the light from his eyes. He and his enemy, the giant tarantula, were beneath the same covering, though the tarantula moved but weakly.

The shower ceased. The web-spider had decided that they were helpless. Then Burl felt the cables of the web give slightly, as the spider approached to sting and suck the sweet juices from its prey.

The web yielded gently as the added weight of the black-bellied spider

approached. Burl froze into stillness under his enveloping covering. Beneath the same silken shroud the tarantula writhed in agony upon the point of Burl's spear. It clashed its jaws, shuddering upon the horny barb.

Burl was quiet in an ecstasy of terror. He waited for the poison-fangs to be thrust into him. He knew the process. He had seen the leisurely fashion in which the giant spiders delicately stung their prey, then withdrew to wait without impatience for the poison to do its work.

When their victim had ceased to struggle, they drew near again, and sucked the sweet juices from the body, first from one point and then another, until what had so recently been a creature vibrant with life became a shrunken, withered husk—to be flung from the web at nightfall. Most spiders are tidy housekeepers, destroying their snares daily to spin anew.

The bloated, evil creature moved meditatively about the shining sheet of silk it had cast over the man and the giant tarantula when they fell from the cliff above. Now only the tarantula moved feebly. Its body was outlined by a bulge in the concealing shroud, throbbing faintly as it still struggled with the spear in its vitals. The irregularly rounded protuberance offered a point of attack for the web spider. It moved quickly forward, and stung.

Galvanized into fresh torment by this new agony, the tarantula writhed in a very hell of pain. Its legs, clustered about the spear still fastened into its body, struck out purposelessly, in horrible gestures of delirious suffering. Burl screamed as one of them touched him, and struggled himself.

His arms and head were free beneath the silken sheet because of the grease and oil that coated them. He clutched at the threads about him and strove to draw himself away from his deadly neighbor. The threads did not break, but they parted one from another, and a tiny opening appeared. One of the tarantula's attenuated limbs touched him again. With the strength of utter panic he hauled himself away, and the opening enlarged. Another struggle, and Burl's head emerged into the open air, and he stared down for twenty feet upon an open space almost carpeted with the chitinous remains of his present captor's former victims.

Burl's head was free, and his breast and arms. The fish slung over his shoulder had shed its oil upon him impartially. But the lower part of his body was held firm by the gummy snare of the web-spider, a snare far more tenacious than any bird-lime ever manufactured by man.

He hung in his tiny window for a moment, despairing. Then he saw, at a little distance, the bulk of the monster spider, waiting patiently for its poison to take effect and the struggling of its prey to be stilled. The tarantula was no more than shuddering now. Soon it would be still,

and the black-bellied creature waiting on the web would approach for its meal.

Burl withdrew his head and thrust desperately at the sticky stuff about his loins and legs. The oil upon his hands kept it from clinging to them, and it gave a little. In a flash of inspiration, Burl understood. He reached over his shoulder and grasped the greasy fish; tore it in a dozen places and smeared himself with the now rancid exudation, pushing the sticky threads from his limbs and oiling the surface from which he had thrust it away.

He felt the web tremble. To the spider, its poison seemed to have failed of effect. Another sting seemed to be necessary. This time it would not insert its fangs into the quiescent tarantula, but would sting where the disturbance was manifest—would send its deadly venom into Burl.

He gasped, and drew himself toward his window. It was as if he would have pulled his legs from his body. His head emerged, his shoulders—half his body was out of the hole.

The colossal spider surveyed him, and made ready to cast more of its silken sheet upon him. The spinnerets became active, and the sticky stuff about Burl's feet gave way! He shot out of the opening and fell sprawling, awkwardly and heavily, upon the earth below, crashing upon the shrunken shell of a flying beetle which had fallen into the snare and had not escaped.

Burl rolled over and over, and then sat up. An angry, foot-long ant stood before him, its mandibles extended threateningly, while its antennae waved wildly in the air. A shrill stridulation filled the air.

In ages past, when ants were tiny creatures of lengths to be measured in fractions of an inch, learned scientists debated gravely if their tribe possessed a cry. They believed that certain grooves upon the body of the insects, after the fashion of those upon the great legs of the cricket, might offer the means of uttering an infinitely high-pitched sound too shrill for man's ears to catch.

Burl knew that the stridulation was caused by the doubtful insect before him, though he had never wondered how it was produced. The cry was used to summon others of its city, to help it in its difficulty or good fortune.

Clickings sounded fifty or sixty feet away. Comrades were coming to aid the pioneer. Harmless save when interfered with—all save the army ant, that is—the whole ant tribe was formidable when aroused. Utterly fearless, they could pull down a man and slay him as so many infuriated fox terriers might have done thirty thousand years before.

Burl fled, without debate, and nearly collided with one of the anchoring

cables of the web from which he had barely escaped a moment before. He heard the shrill sound behind him suddenly subside. The ant, short-sighted as all ants were, no longer felt itself threatened and went peacefully about the business Burl had interrupted, that of finding among the gruesome relics beneath the spider's web some edible carrion which might feed the inhabitants of its city.

Burl sped on for a few hundred yards, and stopped. It behooved him to move carefully. He was in strange territory, and as even the most familiar territory was full of sudden and implacable dangers, unknown lands were doubly or trebly perilous.

Burl, too found difficulty in moving. The glutinous stuff from the spider's shroud of silk still stuck to his feet and picked up small objects as he went along. Old ant-gnawed fragments of insect armour pricked him even through his toughened soles.

He looked about cautiously and removed them, took a dozen steps and had to stop again. Burl's brain had been uncommonly stimulated of late. It had gotten him into at least one predicament—due to his invention of a spear—but had no less readily led to his escape from another. But for the reasoning that had led him to use the grease from the fish upon his shoulder in oiling his body when he struggled out of the spider's snare, he would now be furnishing a meal for that monster.

Cautiously, Burl looked all about him. He seemed to be safe. Then, quite deliberately, he sat down to think. It was the first time in his life that he had done such a thing. The people of his tribe were not given to meditation. But an idea had struck Burl with all the force of inspiration—an abstract idea.

When he was in difficulties, something within him seemed to suggest a way out. Would it suggest an inspiration now? He puzzled over the problem. Childlike—and savage-like—the instant the thought came to him, he proceeded to test it out. He fixed his gaze upon his foot. The sharp edges of pebbles, of the remains of insect-armour, of a dozen things, hurt his feet when he walked. They had done so ever since he had been born, but never had his feet been sticky so that the irritation continued with him for more than a single step.

Now he gazed upon his foot, and waited for the thought within him to develop. Meanwhile, he slowly removed the sharp-pointed fragments, one by one. Partly coated as they were with the half-liquid gum from his feet, they clung to his fingers as they had to his feet, except upon those portions where the oil was thick as before.

Burl's reasoning, before, was simple and of the primary order. Where oil covered him, the web did not. Therefore he would coat the rest of himself with oil. Had he been placed in the same predicament again,

he would have used the same means of escape. But to apply a bit of knowledge gained in one predicament to another difficulty was something he had not yet done.

A dog may be taught that by pulling on the latchstring of a door he may open it, but the same dog coming to a high and close-barred gate with a latchstring attached, will never think of pulling on this second latchstring. He associates a latchstring with the opening of the door. The opening of a gate is another matter entirely.

Burl had been stirred to one invention by imminent peril. That is not extraordinary. But to reason in cold blood, as he presently did, that oil on his feet would nullify the glue upon his feet and enable him again to walk in comfort—that was a triumph. The inventions of savages are essentially matters of life and death, of food and safety. Comfort and luxury are only produced by intelligence of a high order.

Burl, in safety, had added to his comfort. That was truly a more important thing in his development than almost any other thing he could have done. He oiled his feet.

It was an almost infinitesimal problem, but Burl's struggles with the mental process of reasoning were actual. Thirty thousand years before him, a wise man had pointed out that education is simply training in thought, in efficient and effective thinking. Burl's tribe had been too much preoccupied with food and mere existence to think, and now Burl, sitting at the base of a squat toadstool that all but concealed him, reexamplified Rodin's "Thinker" for the first time in many generations.

For Burl to reason that oil upon the soles of his feet would guard him against sharp stones was as much a triumph of intellect as any masterpiece of art in the ages before him. Burl was learning how to think.

He stood up, walked, and crowed in sheer delight, then paused a moment in awe of his own intelligence. Thirty-five miles from his tribe, naked, unarmed, utterly ignorant of fire, of wood, of any weapons save a spear he had experimented with the day before, abysmally uninformed concerning the very existence of any art or science, Burl stopped to assure himself that he was very wonderful.

Pride came to him. He wished to display himself to Saya, these things upon his feet, and his spear. But his spear was gone.

With touching faith in the efficacy of this new pastime, Burl sat promptly down again and knitted his brows. Just as a superstitious person, once convinced that by appeal to a favorite talisman he will be guided aright, will inevitably apply to that talisman on all occasions, so Burl plumped himself down to think.

These questions were easily answered. Burl was naked. He would



search out garments for himself. He was weaponless. He would find himself a spear. He was hungry—and would seek food, and he was far from his tribe, so he would go to them. Puerile reasoning, of course, but valuable, because it was consciously reasoning, consciously appealing to his mind for guidance in difficulty, deliberate progress from a mental desire to a mental resolution.

Even in the high civilization of ages before, few men had really used their brains. The great majority of people had depended upon machines and their leaders to think for them. Burl's tribefolk depended on their stomachs. Burl, however, was gradually developing the habit of thinking which makes for leadership and which would be invaluable to his little tribe.

He stood up again and faced upstream, moving slowly and cautiously, his eyes searching the ground before him keenly and his ears alert for the slightest sound of danger. Gigantic butterflies, riotous in coloring, fluttered overhead through the misty haze. Sometimes a grasshopper hurtled through the air like a projectile, its transparent wings beating the air frantically. Now and then a wasp sped by, intent upon its hunting, or a bee droned heavily along, anxious and worried, striving in a nearly flowerless world to gather the pollen that would feed the hive.

Here and there Burl saw flies of various sorts, some no larger than his thumb, but others the size of his whole hand. They fed upon the juices that dripped from the maggot-infested mushrooms, when filth more to their liking was not at hand.

Very far away a shrill roaring sounded faintly. It was like a multitude of clickings blended into a single sound, but was so far away that it did not impress itself upon Burl's attention. He had all the strictly localized vision of a child. What was near was important, and what was distant could be ignored. Only the imminent required attention, and Burl was preoccupied.

Had he listened, he would have realized that army ants were abroad in countless millions, spreading themselves out in a broad array and eating all they came upon far more destructively than so many locusts.

Locusts in past ages had eaten all green things. There were only giant cabbages and a few such tenacious rank growths in the world that Burl knew. The locusts had vanished with civilization and knowledge and the greater part of mankind, but the army ants remained as an invincible enemy to men and insects, and the most of the fungus growths that covered the earth.

Burl did not notice (he sound, however. He moved forward, briskly though cautiously, searching with his eyes for garments, food, and weapons, lie confidently expected to find all of them within a short distance.

Surely enough he found a thicket—if one might call it so—of edible fungi no more than half a mile beyond the spot where he had improvised his sandals to protect the soles of his feet.

Without especial elation, Burl tugged at the largest until he had broken off a food supply for several days. He went on, eating as he did so, past a broad plain a mile and more across, being broken into odd little hillocks by gradually ripening and suddenly developing mushrooms with which he was unfamiliar.

The earth seemed to be in process of being pushed aside by rounded protuberances of which only the tips showed. Blood-red hemispheres seemed to be forcing aside the earth so they might reach the outer air.

Burl looked at them curiously, and passed among them without touching them. They were strange, and to him most strange things meant danger. In any event, he was full of a new purpose now. He wished garments and weapons.

Above the plain a wasp hovered, a heavy object dangling beneath its black belly, ornamented by a single red band. It was a wasp—the hairy sand-wasp—and it was bringing a paralyzed gray caterpillar to its burrow.

Burl watched it drop down with the speed and sureness of an arrow, pull aside a heavy, flat stone, and descend into the ground. It had a vertical shaft dug down for forty feet or more.

It descended, evidently inspected the interior, reappeared, and vanished into the hole again, dragging the gray worm after it. Burl, marching on over the broad plain that seemed stricken with some erupting disease from the number of red pimples making their appearance, did not know what passed below, but observed the wasp emerge again and busily scratch dirt and stones into the shaft until it was full.

The wasp had paralyzed a caterpillar, taken it to the already prepared burrow, laid an egg upon it, and filled up the entrance. In course of time the egg would hatch into a grub barely as long as Burl's forefinger, which would then feed upon the torpid caterpillar until it had waxed large and fat. Then it would weave itself a chrysalis and sleep a long sleep, only to wake as a wasp and dig its way to the open air.

Burl reached the farther side of the plain and found himself threading the aisles of one of the fungus forests in which the growths were hideous, misshapen travesties upon the trees they had supplanted. Bloated, yellow limbs branched off from rounded, swollen trunks. Here and there a pear-shaped puff-ball, Burl's height and half as much again, waited craftily until a chance touch should cause it to shoot upward a curling puff of infinitely line dust.

Burl went cautiously. There were dangers here, but he moved forward steadily, none the less. A great mass of edible mushroom was slung under one of his arms, and from time to time he broke off a fragment and ate of it, while his large eyes searched this way and that for threats of harm.

Behind him, a high, shrill roaring had grown slightly in volume and nearness, but was still too far away to impress Burl. The army ants were working havoc in the distance. By thousands and millions, myriads upon myriads, they were foraging the country, clambering upon every eminence, descending into every depression, their antennae waving restlessly and their mandibles forever threateningly extended. The ground was black with them, each was ten inches and more in length.

A single such creature would be formidable to an unarmed and naked man like Burl, whose wisest move would be flight, but in their thousands and millions they presented a menace from which no escape seemed possible. They were advancing steadily and rapidly, shrill stridulations and a multitude of clickings marking their movements.

The great helpless caterpillars upon the giant cabbages heard the sound of their coming, but were too stupid to flee. The black multitudes covered the rank vegetables, and tiny but voracious jaws began to tear at the flaccid masses of flesh.

Each creature had some futile means of struggling. The caterpillars strove to throw off their innumerable assailants by writhings and contortions, wholly ineffective. The bees fought their entrance to the gigantic hives with stings and wingbeats. The moths took to the air in helpless blindness when discovered by the relentless throngs of small black insects which reeked of formic acid and left the ground behind them denuded in every living thing.

Before the oncoming horde was a world of teeming life, where mushrooms and fungi fought with thinning numbers of giant cabbages for foothold. Behind the black multitude was—nothing. Mushrooms, cabbages, bees, wasps, crickets. Every creeping and crawling thing that did not get aloft before the black tide reached it was lost, torn to bits by tiny mandibles. Even the hunting spiders and tarantulas fell before the host of insects, having killed many in their final struggles, but overwhelmed by sheer numbers. And the wounded and dying army ants made food for their sound comrades.

There is no mercy among insects. Only the web-spiders sat unmoved and immovable in their colossal snares, secure in the knowledge that their gummy webs would discourage attempts at invasion along the slender supporting cables.

Surging onward, flowing like a monstrous, murky tide over the yellow, steaming earth, the army ants advanced. Their vanguard reached the river, and recoiled. Burl was perhaps five miles distant when they changed their course, communicating the altered line of march to those behind them in some mysterious fashion of transmitting intelligence.

Thirty thousand years before, scientists had debated gravely over the means of communication among ants. They had observed that a single ant finding a bit of booty too large for him to handle alone would return to the ant-city and return with others. From that one instance they deduced a language of gestures made with the antennae.

Burl had no wise theories. He merely knew facts, but he knew that the ants had some form of speech or transmission of ideas. Now, however, he was moving cautiously along toward the stamping grounds of his tribe, in complete ignorance of the black blanket of living creatures creeping over the ground toward him.

A million tragedies marked the progress of the insect army. There was a tiny colony of mining bees—Zebra bees—a single mother, some four feet long, had dug a huge gallery with some ten cells, in which she laid her eggs and fed her grubs with hard-gathered pollen. The grubs had waxed fat and large, became bees, and laid eggs in their turn, within the gallery their mother had dug out for them.

Ten such such bulky insects now foraged busily for grubs within the ancestral home, while the founder of the colony had grown draggled and wingless with the passing of time. Unable to forage herself, the old bee became the guardian of the nest or hive, as is the custom among the mining bees. She closed the opening of the hive with her head, making a living barrier within the entrance, and withdrawing to give entrance and exit only to duly authenticated members of the extensive colony.

The ancient and draggled concierge of the underground dwelling was at her post when the wave of army ants swept over her. Tiny, evil-smelling feet trampled upon her. She emerged to fight with mandible and sting for the sanctity of the hive. In a moment she was a shaggy mass of biting ants, rending and tearing at her chitinous armour. The old bee fought madly, viciously, sounding a buzzing alarm to the colonists yet within the hive. They emerged, fighting as they came, for the gallery leading down was a dark flood of small insects.

For a few moments a battle such as would make an epic was in progress. Ten huge bees, each four to five feet long, fighting with legs and jaw, wing and mandible, with all the ferocity of as many tigers. The liny, vicious ants cove reel them, snapping a( (heir multiple eyes, biting

at the tender joints in their armour—sometimes releasing the larger prey to leap upon an injured comrade wounded by the huge creature they battled in common.

The fight, however, could have but one ending. Struggle as the bees might, herculean as their efforts might be, they were powerless against the incredible numbers of their assailants, who tore them into tiny fragments and devoured them. Before the last shred of the hive's defenders had vanished, the hive itself was gutted alike of the grubs it had contained and the food brought to the grubs by such weary effort of the mature bees.

The army ants went on. Only an empty gallery remained, that and a few fragments of tough armour, unappetizing even to the omniverous ants.

Burl was meditatively inspecting the scene of a recent tragedy, where rent and scraped fragments of a great beetle's shiny casing lay upon the ground. A greater beetle had come upon the first and slain him. Burl was looking upon the remains of the meal.

Three or four minims, little ants barely six inches long, foraged industriously among the bits. A new ant city was to be formed and the queen-ant lay hidden a half-mile away. These were the first hatchlings, who would feed the larger ants on whom would fall the great work of the ant-city. Burl ignored them, searching with his eyes for a spear or weapon.

Behind him the clicking roar, the high-pitched stridulations of the horde of army ants, rose in volume. Burl turned disgustedly away. The best he could find in the way of a weapon was a fiercely toothed hind leg. He picked it up, and an angry whine rose from the ground.

One of the black minims was working busily to detach a fragment of flesh from the joint of the leg, and Burl had snatched the morsel from him. The little creature was hardly half a foot in length, but it advanced upon Burl, shrilling angrily. He struck it with the leg and crushed it. Two of the other minims appeared, attracted by the noise the first had made. Discovering the crushed body of their fellow, they unceremoniously dismembered it and bore it away in triumph.

Burl went on, swinging the toothed limb in his hand. It made a fair club, and Burl was accustomed to use stones to crush the juicy legs of such giant crickets as his tribe sometimes came upon. He formed a half-defined idea of a club. The sharp teeth of the thing in his hand made him realize that a sidewise blow was better than a spearlike thrust.

The sound behind him had become a distant whispering, high-pitched, and growing nearer. The army ants swept over a mushroom

forest, and the yellow, umbrella-like growths swarmed with black creatures devouring the substance on which they found a foothold.

A great bluebottle fly, shining with a metallic luster, reposed in an ecstasy of feasting, sipping through its long proboscis the dark-colored liquid that dripped slowly from a mushroom. Maggots filled the mushroom, and exuded a solvent pepsin that liquefied the white firm "meat."

They fed upon this soup, this gruel, and a surplus dripped to the ground below, where the bluebottle drank eagerly. Burl drew near, and struck. The fly collapsed into a writhing heap. Burl stood over it for an instant, pondering.

The army ants came nearer, down into a tiny valley, swarming into and through a little brook over which Burl had leaped. Ants can remain under water for a long time without drowning, so the small stream was but a minor obstacle, though the current of water swept many of them off their feet until they choked the brook-bed, and their comrades passed over their struggling bodies dry-shod. They were no more than temporarily annoyed, however, and presently crawled out to resume their march.

About a quarter of a mile to the left of Burl's line of march, and perhaps a mile behind the spot where he stood over the dead bluebottle fly, there was a stretch of an acre or more where the giant, rank cabbages had so far resisted the encroachments of the ever present mushrooms. The pale, cross-shaped flowers of the cabbages formed food for many bees, and the leaves fed numberless grubs and worms, and loud-voiced crickets which crouched about on the ground, munching busily at the succulent green stuff. The army ants swept into the green area, ceaselessly devouring all they came upon.

A terrific din arose. The crickets hurtled away in a rocketlike flight, in a dark cloud of wildly beating wings. They shot aimlessly in any direction, with the result that half, or more than half, fell in the midst of the black tide of devouring insects and were seized as they fell. They uttered terrible cries as they were being torn to bits. Horrible inhuman screams reached Burl's ears.

A single such cry of agony would not have attracted Burl's attention—he lived in the very atmosphere of tragedy—but the chorus of creatures in torment made him look up. This was no minor horror. Wholesale slaughter was going on. He peered anxiously in the direction of the sound.

A wild stretch of sickly yellow fungus, here and there interspersed with a squat toadstool or a splash of vivid color where one of the many "rusts" had found a foothold. To the left a group of awkward, misshapen fungoids clustered in silent mockery of a forest of trees. There a mass of faded green, where the giant cabbages stood.

With the true sun never shining upon them save through a blanket of thick haze or heavy clouds, they were pallid things, but they were the only green things Burl had seen. Their nodding white flowers with four petals in the form of a cross glowed against the yellowish green leaves. But as Burl gazed toward them, the green became slowly black.

From where he stood, Burl could see two or three great grubs in lazy contentment, eating ceaselessly on the cabbages on which they rested. Suddenly first one and then the other began to jerk spasmodically. Burl saw that about each of them a tiny rim of black had clustered. Tiny black motes milled over the green surfaces of the cabbages. The grubs became black, the cabbages became black. Horrible contortions of the writhing grubs told of the agonies they were enduring. Then a black wave appeared at the further edge of the stretch of the sickly yellow fungus, a glistening, living wave, that moved forward rapidly with the roar of clickings and a persistent overtone of shrill stridulations.

The hair rose upon Burl's head. He knew what this was! He knew all too well the meaning of that tide of shining bodies. With a gasp of terror, all his intellectual preoccupations forgotten, he turned and fled in ultimate panic. And the tide came slowly on after him.

He flung away the great mass of edible mushroom, but clung to his sharp-toothed club desperately, and darted through the tangled aisles of the little mushroom forest with a heedless disregard of the dangers that might await him there. Flies buzzed about him loudly, huge creatures, glittering with a metallic luster. Once he was struck upon the shoulder by the body of one of them, and his skin was torn by the swiftly vibrating wings of the insect, as long as Burl's hand.

Burl thrust it away and sped on. The oil with which he was partly covered had turned rancid, now, and the odor attracted them, connoisseurs of the fetid. They buzzed over his head, keeping pace even with his headlong flight.

A heavy weight settled upon his head, and in a moment was doubled. Two of the creatures had dropped upon his oily hair, to sip the rancid oil through their disgusting proboscises. Burl shook them off with his hand and ran madly on. His ears were keenly attuned to the sound of the army ants behind him, and it grew but little farther away.

The clicking roar continued, but began to be overshadowed by the buzzing of the flies. In Burl's time the flies had no great heaps of putrid matter in which to lay their eggs. The ants—busy scavengers—carted away the debris of the multitudinous tragedies of the insect world long before it could acquire the ganicy flavor beloved by the fly maggots.

Only in isolated spots were the flies really numerous, but there they clustered in clouds that darkened the sky.

Such a buzzing, whirling cloud surrounded the madly running figure of Burl. It seemed as though a miniature whirlwind kept pace with the little pink-skinned man, a whirlwind composed of winged bodies and multi-faceted eyes. He twirled his club before him, and almost every stroke was interrupted by an impact against a thinly armoured body which collapsed with a spurting of reddish liquid.

An agonizing pain as of a red-hot iron struck upon Burl's back. One of the stinging flies had thrust its sharp-tipped proboscis into Burl's flesh to suck the blood.

Burl uttered a cry and—ran full tilt into the thick stalk of a blackened and draggled toadstool. There was a curious crackling as of wet punk or brittle rotten wood. The toadstool collapsed upon itself with a strange splashing sound. Many flies had laid their eggs in the fungoid, and it was a teeming mass of corruption and ill-smelling liquid.

With the crash of the toadstool's "head" upon the ground, it fell into a dozen pieces, and the earth for yards around was spattered with a stinking liquid in which tiny, headless maggots twitched convulsively.

The buzzing of the flies took on a note of satisfaction, and they settled by hundreds about the edges of the ill-smelling pools, becoming lost in the ecstasy of feasting while Burl staggered to his feet and darted off again. This time he was but a minor attraction to the flies, and but one or two came near him. From every direction they were hurrying to the toadstool feast, to the banquet of horrible, liquefied fungus that lay spread upon the ground.

Burl ran on. He passed beneath the wide-spreading leaves of a giant cabbage. A great grasshopper crouched upon the ground, its tremendous jaws crunching the rank vegetation voraciously. Half a dozen great worms ate steadily from their resting-places among the leaves. One of them had slung itself beneath an overhanging leaf—which would have thatched a dozen homes for as many men—and was placidly anchoring itself in preparation for the spinning of a cocoon in which to sleep the sleep of metamorphosis.

A mile away, the great black tide of army ants was advancing relentlessly. The great cabbage, the huge grasshopper, and all the stupid caterpillars upon the wide leaves would soon be covered with the tiny biting insects. The cabbage would be reduced to a chewed and destroyed stump, the colossal, furry grubs would be torn into a myriad mouthfuls and devoured by the black army ants, and the grasshopper would strike out with terrific, unguided strength, crushing its assailants by blows of its powerful hind legs and bites of its great jaws. But it



would die, making terrible sounds of torment as the vicious mandibles of the army ants found crevices in its armour.

The clicking roar of the ants' advance overshadowed all other sounds, now. Burl was running madly, breath coming in great gasps, his eyes wide with panic. Alone of all the world about him, he knew the danger behind. The insects he passed were going about their business with that terrifying efficiency found only in the insect world.

There is something strangely daunting in the actions of an insect. It moves so directly, with such uncanny precision, with such utter indifference to anything but the end in view. Cannibalism is a rule, almost without exception. The paralysis of prey, so it may remain alive and fresh—though in agony—for weeks on end, is a common practice. The eating piecemeal of still living victims is a matter of course.

Absolute mercilessness, utter callousness, incredible inhumanity beyond anything known in the animal world is the natural and commonplace practice of the insects. And these vast cruelties are performed by armoured, machine-like creatures with an abstraction and a routine air that suggests a horrible Nature behind them all.

Burl nearly stumbled upon a tragedy. He passed within a dozen yards of a space where a female dung-beetle was devouring the mate whose honeymoon had begun that same day and ended in that gruesome fashion. Hidden behind a clump of mushrooms, a great yellow-banded spider was cooly threatening a smaller male of her own species. He was discreetly ardent, but if he won the favor of the gruesome creature he was wooing, he would furnish an appetizing meal for her some time within twenty-four hours.

Burl's heart was pounding madly. The breath whistled in his nostrils—and behind him, the wave of army ants was drawing nearer. They came upon the feasting flies. Some took to the air and escaped, but others were too engrossed in their delicious meal. The twitching little maggots, stranded upon the earth by the scattering of their soupy broth, were torn in pieces. The flies who were seized vanished into tiny maws. The serried ranks of black insects went on.

The tiny clickings of their limbs, the perpetual challenges and cross-challenges of crossed antennae, the stridulations of the creatures, all combined to make a high-pitched but deafening din. Now and then another sound pierced the noises made by the ants themselves. A cricket, cized by a thousand tiny jaws, uttered cries of agony. The shrill note of (he crickets had grown deeply bass with the increase in size of the organs that uttered it.

There was a strange contrast between the ground before the advancing

horde and that immediately behind it. Before, a busy world, teeming with life. Butterflies floating overhead on lazy wings, grubs waxing fat and huge upon the giant cabbages, crickets eating, great spiders sitting quietly in their lairs waiting with invincible patience for prey to draw near their trap doors or fall into their webs, colossal beetles lumbering heavily through the mushroom forests, seeking food, making love in monstrous, tragic fashion.

And behind the wide belt of army ants—chaos. The edible mushrooms gone. The giant cabbages left as mere stumps of unappetizing pulp, the busy life of the insect world completely wiped out save for the flying creatures that fluttered helplessly over an utterly changed landscape. Here and there little bands of stragglers moved busily over the denuded earth, searching for some fragment of food that might conceivably have been overlooked by the main body.

Burl was putting forth his last ounce of strength. His limbs trembled, his breathing was agony, sweat stood out upon his forehead. He ran a little, naked man with the disjointed fragment of a huge insect's limb in his hand, running for his insignificant life, running as if his continued existence among the million tragedies of that single day were the purpose for which the whole of the universe had been created.

He sped across an open space a hundred yards across. A thicket of beautifully golden mushrooms (*Agaricus caesareus*) barred his way. Beyond the mushrooms a range of strangely colored hills began, purple and green and black and gold, melting into each other, branching off from each other, inextricably tangled.

They rose to a height of perhaps sixty or seventy feet, and above them a little grayish haze had gathered. There seemed to be a layer of tenuous vapor upon their surfaces, which slowly rose and coiled, and gathered into a tiny cloudlet above their tips.

The hills, themselves, were but masses of fungus, mushrooms and fungoids of every description, yeasts, "musts," and every form of fungus growth which had grown within itself and about itself until this great mass of strangely colored, spongy stuff had gathered in a mass that undulated unevenly across the level earth for miles.

Burl burst through the golden thicket and attacked the ascent. His feet sank into the spongy sides of the hillock. Panting, gasping, staggering from exhaustion, he made his way up the top. He plunged into a little valley on the farther side, up another slope. For perhaps ten minutes he forced himself on, then collapsed. He lay, unable to move further, in a little hollow, his sharp-toothed club still clasped in his hands. Above him, a bright yellow butterfly with a thirty-foot spread of wing, fluttered lightly.

He lay motionless, breathing in great gasps, his limbs stubbornly refusing to lift him.

The sound of the army ants continued to grow near. At last, above the crest of the last hillock he had surmounted, two tiny antennae appeared, then the black glistening head of an army ant, the forerunner of its horde. It moved deliberately forward, waving its antennae ceaselessly. It made its way toward Burl, tiny clickings coming from the movements of its limbs.

A little wisp of tenuous vapor swirled toward the ant, a wisp of the same vapor that had gathered above the whole range of hills as a thin, low cloud. It enveloped the insect—and the ant seemed to be attacked by a strange convulsion. Its legs moved aimlessly. It threw itself desperately about. If it had been an animal, Burl would have watched with wondering eyes while it coughed and gasped, but it was an insect breathing through air-holes in its abdomen. It writhed upon the spongy fungus growth across which it had been moving.

Burl, lying in an exhausted, panting heap upon the purple mass of fungus, was conscious of a strange sensation. His body felt strangely warm. He knew nothing of fire or the heat of the sun, and the only sensation of warmth he had ever known was that caused when the members of his tribe had huddled together in their hiding place when the damp chill of the night had touched their soft-skinned bodies. Then the heat of their breaths and their bodies had kept out the chill.

This heat that Burl now felt was a hotter, fiercer heat. He moved his body with a tremendous effort, and for a moment the fungus was cool and soft beneath him. Then, slowly, the sensation of heat began again, and increased until Burl's skin was red and inflamed from the irritation.

The thin and tenuous vapor, too, made Burl's lungs smart and his eyes water. He was breathing in great, choking gasps, but the period of rest—short as it was—had enabled him to rise and stagger on. He crawled painfully to the top of the slope, and looked back.

The hill-crest on which he stood was higher than any of those he had passed in his painful run, and he could see clearly the whole of the purple range. Where he was, he was near the farther edge of the range, which was here perhaps half a mile wide.

It was a ceaseless, undulating mass of hills and hollows, ridges and spurs, all of them colored, purple and brown and golden-yellow, deepest black and dingy white. And from the tips of most of the pointed hills little wisps of vapor rose up.

A (hin, dark cloud had gathered overhead. Burl could look to the

right and left, and see the hills fading into the distance, growing fainter as the haze above them seemed to grow thicker. He saw, too, the advancing cohorts of the army ants, creeping over the tangled mass of fungus growth. They seemed to be feeding as they went, upon the fungus that had gathered into these incredible monstrosities.

The hills were living. They were not upheavals of the ground, they were festering heaps of insanely growing, festering mushrooms and fungus. Upon most of them a purple mould had spread itself so that they seemed a range of purple hills, but here and there patches of other vivid colors showed, and there was a large hill whose whole side was a brilliant golden hue. Another had tiny bright red spots of a strange and malignant mushroom whose properties Burl did not know, scattered all over the purple with which it was covered.

Burl leaned heavily upon his club and watched dully. He could run no more. The army ants were spreading everywhere over the mass of fungus. They would reach him soon.

Far to the right the vapor thickened. A column of smoke arose. What Burl did not know and would never know was that far down in the interior of that compressed mass of fungus, slow oxidization had been going on. The temperature of the interior had been raised. In the darkness and the dampness deep down in the hills, spontaneous combustion had begun.

Just as the vast piles of coal the railroad companies of thirty thousand years before had gathered together sometimes began to burn fiercely in their interiors, and just as the farmers' piles of damp straw suddenly burst into fierce flames from no cause, so these huge piles of tinder-like mushrooms had been burning slowly within themselves.

There had been no flames, because the surface remained intact and nearly air-tight. But when the army ants began to tear at the edible surfaces despite the heat they encountered, fresh air found its way to the smouldering masses of fungus. The slow combustion became rapid combustion. The dull heat became fierce flames. The slow trickle of thin smoke became a huge column of thick, choking, acrid stuff that set the army ants that breathed it into spasms of convulsive writhing.

From a dozen points the flames burst out. A dozen or more columns of blinding smoke rose to the heavens. A pall of fume-laden smoke gathered above the range of purple hills, while Burl watched apathetically. And the serried ranks of army ants marched on to the widening furnaces that awaited them.

They had recoiled from the river, because their instinct had warned them. Thirty thousand years without danger from fire, however, had let (their racial fear of fire die out. They marched into (he blazing ori-

fices they had opened in the hills, snapping with their mandibles at the leaping flames, springing at the glowing tinder.

The blazing area widened, as the purple surface was undermined and fell in. Burl watched the phenomenon without comprehension and even without thankfulness. He stood, panting more and more slowly, breathing more and more easily, until the glow from the approaching flames reddened his skin and the acrid smoke made tears flow from his eyes.

Then he retreated slowly, leaning on his club and looking back. The black wave of the army ants was sweeping into the fire, sweeping into the incredible heat of that carbonized material burning with an open flame. At last there were only the little bodies of stragglers from the great ant-army, scurrying here and there over the ground their comrades had denuded of all living things. The bodies of the main army had vanished—burnt to crisp ashes in the furnace of the hills.

There had been agony in that flame, dreadful agony such as no man would like to dwell upon. The insane courage of the ants, attacking with their horny jaws the burning masses of fungus, rolling over and over with a flaming missile clutched in their mandibles, sounding their shrill war cry while cries of agony came from them—blinded, their antennae burnt off, their lidless eyes scorched by the licking flames, yet going madly forward on flaming feet to attack, ever attack this unknown and unknowable enemy.

Burl made his way slowly over the hills. Twice he saw small bodies of the army ants. They had passed between the widening surfaces their comrades had opened, and they were feeding voraciously upon the hills they trod on. Once Burl was spied, and a shrill war cry was sounded, but he moved on, and the ants were busily eating. A single ant rushed toward him. Burl brought down his club, and a writhing body remained to be eaten later by its comrades when they came upon it.

Again night fell. The skies grew red in the west, though the sun did not shine through the ever present cloud bank. Darkness spread across the sky. Utter blackness fell over the whole mad world, save where the luminous mushrooms shed their pale light upon the ground and fire-flies the length of Burl's arm shed their fitful gleams upon an earth of fungus growths and monstrous insects.

Burl made his way across the range of mushroom hills, picking his path with his large blue eyes whose pupils expanded to great size. Slowly, from the sky, now a drop and then a drop, now a drop and then a drop, the nightly rain that would continue until daybreak began.

Burl found the ground hard beneath his feet. He listened keenly for sounds of clanger. Something rustled heavily in a thicket of mushrooms

a hundred yards away. There were sounds of preening, and of delicate feet placed lightly here and there upon the ground. Then the throbbing beat of huge wings began suddenly, and a body took to the air.

A fierce, down-coming current of air smote Burl, and he looked upward in time to catch the outline of a huge body—a moth—as it passed above him. He turned to watch the line of its flight, and saw a strange glow in the sky behind him. The mushroom hills were still burning.

He crouched beneath a squat toadstool and waited for the dawn, his club held tightly in his hands, and his ears alert for any sound of danger. The slow-dropping, sodden rain kept on. It fell with irregular, drumlike beats upon the tough top of the toadstool under which he had taken refuge.

Slowly, slowly, the sodden rainfall continued. Drop by drop, all the night long, the warm pellets of liquid came from the sky. They boomed upon the hollow heads of the toadstools, and splashed into the steaming pools that lay festering all over the fungus-covered earth.

And all the night long the great fires grew and spread in the mass of already half-carbonized mushroom. The flare at the horizon grew brighter and nearer. Burl, naked and hiding beneath a huge mushroom, watched it grow near him with wide eyes, wondering what this thing was. He had never seen a flame before.

The overhanging clouds were brightened by the flames. Over a stretch at least a dozen miles in length and from half a mile to three miles across, seething furnaces sent columns of dense smoke up to the roof of clouds, luminous from the glow below them, and spreading out and forming an intermediate layer below the cloudbanks.

It was like the glow of all the many lights of a vast city thrown against the sky—but the last great city had moulded into fungus-covered rubbish thirty thousand years before. Like the flitting of airplanes above a populous city, too, was the flitting of fascinated creatures above the glow.

Moths and great flying beetles, gigantic gnats and midges grown huge with the passing of time, they fluttered and danced the dance of death above the flames. As the fire grew nearer to Burl, he could see them.

Colossal, delicately formed creatures swooped above the strange blaze. Moths with their riotously colored wings of thirty-foot spread beat the air with mighty strokes, and their huge eyes glowed like carbuncles as they stared with the frenzied gaze of intoxicated devotees into the glowing flames below them.

Burl saw a great peacock moth soaring above the burning mushroom hills. Its wings were all of forty feet across, and glittered like gigantic

sails as the moth gazed down at the flaming furnace below. The separate flames had united, now, and a single sheet of white-hot burning stuff spread across the country for miles, sending up its clouds of smoke, in which and through which the fascinated creatures flew.

Feathery antennae of the finest lace spread out before the head of the peacock moth, and its body was softest, richest velvet. A ring of snow-white down marked where its head began, and the red glow from below smote on the maroon of its body with a strange effect.

For one instant it was outlined clearly. Its eyes glowed more redly than any ruby's fire, and the great, delicate wings were poised in flight. Burl caught the flash of the flames upon two great iridescent spots upon the wide-spread wings. Shining purple and vivid red, the glow of opal and the sheen of pearl, all the glory of chalcedony and chrysoprase formed a single wonder in the red glare of burning fungus. White smoke compassed the great moth all about, dimming the radiance of its gorgeous dress.

Burl saw it dart straight into the thickest and brightest of the licking flames, flying madly, eagerly, into the searing, hellish heat as a willing, drunken sacrifice to the god of fire.

Monster flying beetles with their horny wing-cases stiffly stretched, blundered above the reeking, smoking pyre. In the red light from before them they shone like burnished metal, and their clumsy bodies with the spurred and fierce-toothed limbs darted like so many grotesque meteors through the luminous haze of ascending smoke.

Burl saw strange collisions and still stranger meetings. Male and female flying creatures circled and spun in the glare, dancing their dance of love and death in the wild radiance from the funeral pyre of the purple hills. They mounted higher than Burl could see, drunk with the ecstasy of living, then descended to plunge headlong to death in the roaring fires beneath them.

From every side the creatures came. Moths of brightest yellow with soft and furry bodies palpitant with life flew madly into the column of light that reached to the overhanging clouds, then moths of deepest black with gruesome symbols upon their wings came swiftly to dance, like motes in a bath of sunlight, above the glow.

And Burl sat crouched beneath an overshadowing toadstool and watched. The perpetual, slow, sodden raindrops fell. A continual faint hissing penetrated the sound of the fire—the raindrops being turned to steam. The air was alive with flying things. From far away. Burl heard a strange, deep bass muttering. He did not know the cause, but there was a vast swamp, of the existence of which he was ignorant, some ten

or fifteen miles away, and the chorus of insect-eating giant frogs reached his ears even at that distance.

The night wore on, while the flying creatures above the lire danced and died, their numbers ever recruited by fresh arrivals. Burl sat tensely still, his wide eyes watching everything, his mind groping for an explanation of what he saw. At last the sky grew dimly gray, then brighter, and day came on. The flames of the burning hills grew faint as the fire died down, and after a long time Burl crept from his hiding place and stood erect.

A hundred yards from where he was, a straight wall of smoke rose from the still smouldering fungus, and Burl could see it stretching for miles in either direction. He turned to continue on his way, and saw the remains of one of the tragedies of the night.

A huge moth had flown into the flames, been horribly scorched, and floundered out again. Had it been able to fly, it would have returned to its devouring deity, but now it lay immovable upon the ground, its antennae seared hopelessly, one beautiful, delicate wing burned in gaping holes, its eyes dimmed by flame and its exquisitely tapering limbs broken and crushed by the force with which it had struck the ground. It lay helpless upon the earth, only the stumps of its antennae moving restlessly, and its abdomen pulsating slowly as it drew pain-racked breaths.

Burl drew near and picked up a stone. He moved on presently, a velvet cloak cast over his shoulders, gleaming with all the colors of the rainbow. A gorgeous mass of soft, blue moth fur was about his middle, and he had bound upon his forehead two yard-long, golden fragments of the moth's magnificent antennae. He strode on, slowly, clad as no man had been clad in all the ages.

After a little he secured a spear and took up his journey to Saya, looking like a prince of Ind upon a bridal journey—though no mere prince ever wore such raiment in days of greatest glory.

For many long miles Burl threaded his way through a single forest of thin-stalked toadstools. They towered three-man-heights high, and all about their bases were streaks and splashes of the rusts and moulds that preyed upon them. Twice Burl came to open glades wherein open, bubbling pools of green slime festered in corruption, and once he hid himself fearfully as a monster scarabeus beetle lumbered within three yards of him, moving heavily onward with a clanking of limbs as of some mighty machine.

Burl saw the mighty armour and the inward-curving jaws of the creature, and envied him his weapons. The time was not yet come, however,



when Burl would smile at the great insect and hunt him for the juicy flesh contained in those armoured limbs.

Burl was still a savage, still ignorant, still timid. His principal advance had been that whereas he had fled without reasoning, he now paused to see if he need flee. In his hands he bore a long, sharp-pointed chitinous spear. It had been the weapon of a huge, unnamed flying insect scorched to death in the burning of the purple hills, which had floundered out of the flames to die. Burl had worked for an hour before being able to detach the weapon he coveted. It was as long and longer than Burl himself.

He was a strange sight, moving slowly and cautiously through the shadowed lanes of the mushroom forest. A cloak of delicate velvet in which all the colors of the rainbow played in iridescent beauty hung from his shoulders. A mass of soft and beautiful moth fur was about his middle, and in the strip of sinew about his waist the fiercely toothed limb of a fighting beetle was thrust carelessly. He had bound to his forehead twin stalks of a great moth's feathery golden antennae.

Against the play of color that came from his borrowed plumage his pink skin showed in odd contrast. He looked like some proud knight walking slowly through the gardens of a goblin's castle. But he was still a fearful creature, no more than the monstrous creatures about him save in the possession of latent intelligence. He was weak—and therein lay his greatest promise. A hundred thousand years before him his ancestors had been forced by lack of claws and fangs to develop brains.

Burl was sunk as low as they had been, but he had to combat more horrifying enemies, more inexorable threatenings, and many times more crafty assailants. His ancestors had invented knives and spears and flying missiles. The creatures about Burl had knives and spears a thousand times more deadly than the weapons that had made his ancestors masters of the woods and forests.

Burl was in comparison vastly more weak than his forebears had been, and it was that weakness that in times to come would lead him and those who followed him to heights his ancestors had never known. But now—

He heard a discordant, deep bass bellow, coming from a spot not twenty yards away. In a flash of panic he darted behind a clump of mushrooms and hid himself, panting in sheer terror. He waited for an instant in frozen fear, motionless and tense. His wide, blue eyes were glassy.

The bellow came again, but this time with a querulous note. Burl heard a crashing and plunging as of some creature caught in a snare.

A mushroom fell with a brittle snapping, and the spongy thud as it fell to the ground was followed by a tremendous commotion. Something was fighting desperately against something else, but Burl did not know what creature or creatures might be in combat.

He waited for a long time, and the noise gradually died away. Presently Burl's breath came more slowly, and his courage returned. He stole from his hiding place, and would have made away, but something held him back. Instead of creeping from the scene, he crept cautiously over toward the source of the noise.

He peered between two cream-colored toadstool stalks and saw the cause of the noise. A wide, funnel-shaped snare of silk was spread out before him, some twenty yards across and as many deep. The individual threads could be plainly seen, but in the mass it seemed a fabric of sheerest, finest texture. Held up by the tall mushrooms, it was anchored to the ground below, and drew away to a tiny point through which a hole gave on some yet unknown recess. And all the space of the wide snare was hung with threads, fine, twisted threads no more than half the thickness of Burl's finger.

This was the trap of a labyrinth spider. Not one of the interlacing threads was strong enough to hold the feeblest of prey, but the threads were there by thousands. A great cricket had become entangled in the maze of sticky lines. Its limbs thrashed out, smashing the snare-lines at every stroke, but at every stroke meeting and becoming entangled with a dozen more. It thrashed about mightily, emitting at intervals the horrible, deep bass cry that the chirping voice of the cricket had become with its increase in size.

Burl breathed more easily, and watched with a fascinated curiosity. Mere death—even tragic death—as among insects held no great interest for him. It was a matter of such common and matter-of-fact occurrence that he was not greatly stirred. But a spider and his prey was another matter.

There were few insects that deliberately sought man. Most insects have their allotted victims, and will touch no others, but spiders have a terrifying impartiality. One great beetle devouring another was a matter of indifference to Burl. A spider devouring some luckless insect was but an example of what might happen to him. He watched alertly, his gaze traveling from the enmeshed cricket to the strange orifice at the rear of the funnel-shaped snare.

The opening darkened. Two shining, glistening eyes had been watching from the rear of the funnel. It drew itself into a tunnel there, in

which the spider had been waiting. Now it swung out lightly and came toward the cricket. It was a gray spider (*Agelena labyrinthica*), with twin black ribbons upon its thorax, next the head, and with two stripes of curiously speckled brown and white upon its abdomen. Burl saw, too, two curious appendages like a tail.

It came nimbly out of its tunnel-like hiding place and approached the cricket. The cricket was struggling only feebly now, and the cries it uttered were but feeble, because of the confining threads that fettered its limbs. Burl saw the spider throw itself upon the cricket and saw the final, convulsive shudder of the insect as the spider's fangs pierced its tough armour. The sting lasted a long time, and finally Burl saw that the spider was really feeding. All the succulent juices of the now dead cricket were being sucked from its body by the spider. It had stung the cricket upon the haunch, and presently it went to the other leg and drained that, too, by means of its powerful internal suction-pump. When the second haunch had been sucked dry, the spider pawed the lifeless creature for a few moments and left it.

Food was plentiful, and the spider could afford to be dainty in its feeding. The two choicest titbits had been consumed. The remainder could be discarded.

A sudden thought came to Burl and quite took his breath away. For a second his knees knocked together in self-induced panic. He watched the gray spider carefully with growing determination in his eyes. He, Burl, had killed a hunting-spider upon the red-clay cliff. True, the killing had been an accident, and had nearly cost him his own life a few minutes later in the web-spider's snare, but he had killed a spider, and of the most deadly kind.

Now, a great ambition was growing in Burl's heart. His tribe had always feared spiders too much to know much of their habits, but they knew one or two things. The most important was that the snare-spiders never left their lairs to hunt—never! Burl was about to make a daring application of that knowledge.

He drew back from the white and shining snare and crept softly to (he rear. The fabric gathered itself into a point and then continued for some twenty feet as a tunnel, in which the spider waited while dreaming of its last meal and waiting for the next victim to become entangled in the labyrinth in front. Burl made his way to a point where the tunnel was no more than ten feet away, and waited.

Presently, through the interstices of the silk, he saw the gray bulk of the spider. It had left the exhausted body of the cricket, and returned to its resting place. It settled itself carefully upon the soft walls of

the tunnel, with its shining eyes fixed upon the tortuous threads of its trap. Burl's hair was standing straight up upon his head from sheer fright, but he was the slave of an idea.

He drew near and poised his spear, his new and sharp spear, taken from the body of an unknown flying creature killed by the burning purple hills. Burl raised the spear and aimed its sharp and deadly point at the thick gray bulk he could see dimly through the threads of the tunnel. He thrust it home with all his strength—and ran away at the top of his speed, glassy-eyed from terror.

A long time later he ventured near again, his heart in his mouth, ready to flee at the slightest sound. All was still. Burl had missed the horrible convulsions of the wounded spider, had not heard the frightful gnashings of its fangs as it tore at the piercing weapon, had not seen the silken threads of the tunnel ripped as the spider—hurt to death—had struggled with insane strength to free itself.

He came back beneath the overshadowing toadstools, stepping quietly and cautiously, to find a great rent in the silken tunnel, to find the great gray bulk lifeless and still, half-fallen through the opening the spear had first made. A little puddle of evil-smelling liquid lay upon the ground below the body, and from time to time a droplet fell from the spear into the puddle with a curious splash.

Burl looked at what he had done, saw the dead body of the creature he had slain, saw the ferocious mandibles, and the keen and deadly fangs. The dead eyes of the creature still stared at him malignantly, and the hairy legs were still braced as if further to enlarge the gaping hole through which it had partly fallen.

Exultation filled Burl's heart. His tribe had been but furtive vermin for thousands of years, fleeing from the mighty insects, hiding from them, and if overtaken but waiting helplessly for death, screaming shrilly in terror.

He, Burl, had turned the tables. He had slain one of the enemies of his tribe. His breast expanded. Always his tribesmen went quietly and fearfully, making no sound. But a sudden, exultant yell burst from Burl's lips—the first hunting cry from the lips of a man in three hundred centuries!

The next second his pulse nearly stopped in sheer panic at having made such a noise. He listened fearfully, but there was no sound. He drew near his prey and carefully withdrew his spear. The viscid liquid made it slimy and slippery, and he had to wipe it dry against a leathery toadstool. Then Burl had to conquer his illogical fear again before daring to touch (he creature he had slain.

He moved off presently, with the belly of the spider upon his back and two of the hairy legs over his shoulders. The other limbs of the monster hung limp, and trailed upon the ground. Burl was now a still more curious sight as a gayly colored object with a cloak shining in iridescent colors, the golden antennae of a great moth rising from his forehead, and the hideous bulk of a gray spider for a burden.

He moved through the thin-stalked mushroom forest, and, because of the thing he carried, all creatures fled before him. They did not fear man—their instinct was slow-moving—but during all the millions of years that insects have existed, there have existed spiders to prey upon them. So Burl moved on in solemn state, a brightly clad man bent beneath the weight of a huge and horrible monster.

He came upon a valley full of torn and blackened mushrooms. There was not a single yellow top among them. Every one had been infested with tiny maggots which had liquefied the tough meat of the mushroom and caused it to drip to the ground below. And all the liquid had gathered in a golden pool in the center of the small depression. Burl heard a loud humming and buzzing before he topped the rise that opened the valley for his inspection. He stopped a moment and looked down.

A golden-red lake, its center reflecting the hazy sky overhead. All about, blackened mushrooms, seeming to have been charred and burned by a fierce flame. A slow-flowing golden brooklet trickled slowly over a rocky ledge, into the larger pool. And all about the edges of the golden lake, in ranks and rows, by hundreds, thousands, and by millions, were ranged the green-gold, shining bodies of great flies.

They were small as compared with the other insects. They had increased in size but a fraction of the amount that the bees, for example, had increased; but it was due to an imperative necessity of their race.

The flesh-flies laid their eggs by hundreds in decaying carcasses. The others laid their eggs by hundreds in the mushrooms. To feed the maggots that would hatch, a relatively great quantity of food was needed, therefore the flies must remain comparatively small, or the body of a single grasshopper, say, would furnish food for but two or three grubs instead of the hundreds it must support.

Burl stared down at the golden pool. Bluebottles, greenbottles, and all the flies of metallic luster were gathered at the Lucullan feast of corruption. Their buzzing as they darted above the odorous pool of golden liquid made the sound Burl had heard. Their bodies flashed and glittered as they darted back and forth, seeking a place to alight and join in the orgy.

Those which clustered about the banks of the pool were still as if

carved from metal. Their huge, red eyes glowed, and their bodies shone with an obscene fatness. Flies are the most disgusting of all insects. Burl watched them a moment, watched the interlacing streams of light as they buzzed eagerly above the pool, seeking a place at the festive board.

A drumming roar sounded in the air. A golden speck appeared in the sky, a slender, needle-like body with transparent, shining wings and two huge eyes. It grew nearer and became a dragonfly twenty feet and more in length, its body shimmering, purest gold. It poised itself above the pool and then darted down. Its jaws snapped viciously and repeatedly, and at each snapping the glittering body of a fly vanished.

A second dragonfly appeared, its body a vivid purple, and a third. They swooped and rushed above the golden pool, snapping in mid air, turning their abrupt, angular turns, creatures of incredible ferocity and beauty. At the moment they were nothing more or less than slaughtering-machines. They darted here and there, their many-faceted eyes burning with blood-lust. In that mass of buzzing flies even the most voracious appetite must be sated, but the dragonflies kept on. Beautiful, slender, graceful creatures, they dashed here and there above the pond like avenging fiends or the mythical dragons for which they had been named.

Only a few miles farther on Burl came upon a familiar landmark. He knew it well, but from a safe distance as always. A mass of rock had heaved itself up from the nearly level plain over which he was traveling, and formed an outjutting cliff. At one point the rock overhung a sheer drop, making an inverted ledge—a roof over nothingness—which had been pre-empted by a hairy creature and made into a fairylike dwelling. A white hemisphere clung tenaciously to the rock above, and long cables anchored it firmly.

Burl knew the place as one to be fearfully avoided. A Clotho spider (*Clotho Durandi*, *LATR*) had built itself a nest there, from which it emerged to hunt the unwary. Within that half-globe there was a monster, resting upon a cushion of softest silk. But if one went too near, one of the little inverted arches, seemingly firmly closed by a wall of silk, would open and a creature out of a dream of hell emerge, to run with fiendish agility toward its prey.

Surely, Burl knew the place. Hung upon the outer walls of the silken palace were stones and tiny boulders, discarded fragments of former meals, and the gutted armour from limbs of ancient prey. But what caused Burl to know the place most surely and most terribly was another decoration that dangled from the castle of this insect ogre. This was

the shrunken, desiccated figure of a man, all its juices extracted and the life gone.

The death of that man had saved Burl's life two years before. They had been together, seeking a new source of edible mushrooms for food. The Clotho spider was a hunter, not a spinner of snares. It sprang suddenly from behind a great puff-ball, and the two men froze in terror. Then it came swiftly forward and deliberately chose its victim. Burl had escaped when the other man was seized. Now he looked meditatively at the hiding place of his ancient enemy. Some day—

But now he passed on. He went past the thicket in which the great moths hid during the day, and past the pool—a turgid thing of slime and yeast—in which a monster water snake lurked. He penetrated the little wood of the shining mushrooms that gave out light at night, and the shadowed place where the truffle-hunting beetles went chirping thunderously during the dark hours.

And then he saw Saya. He caught a flash of pink skin vanishing behind the thick stalk of a squat toadstool, and ran forward, calling her name. She appeared, and saw the figure with the horrible bulk of the spider upon its back. She cried out in horror, and Burl understood. He let his burden fall and then went swiftly toward her.

They met. Saya waited timidly until she saw who this man was, and then astonishment went over her face. Gorgeously attired, in an iridescent cloak from the whole wing of a great moth, with a strip of softest fur from a night-flying creature about his middle, with golden, feathery antennae bound upon his forehead, and a fierce spear in his hands—this was not the Burl she had known.

But then he moved slowly toward her, filled with a fierce delight at seeing her again, thrilling with joy at the slender gracefulness of her form and the dark richness of her tangled hair. He held out his hands and touched her shyly. Then, manlike, he began to babble excitedly of the things that had happened to him, and dragged her toward his great victim, the gray-bellied spider.

Saya trembled when she saw the furry bulk lying upon the ground, and would have fled when Burl advanced and took it upon his back. Then something of the pride that filled him came vicariously to her. She smiled a flashing smile, and Burl stopped short in his excited explanation. He was suddenly tongue-tied. His eyes became pleading and soft. He laid the huge spider at her feet and spread out his hands imploringly.

Thirty thousand years of savagery had not lessened the femininity in Saya. She became aware that Burl was her slave, that these wonderful

things he wore and had done were as nothing if she did not approve. She drew away—saw the misery in Burl's face—and abruptly ran into his arms and clung to him, laughing happily. And quite suddenly Burl saw with extreme clarity that all these things he had done, even the slaying of a great spider, were of no importance whatever beside this most wonderful thing that had just happened, and told Saya so quite humbly, but holding her very close to him as he did so.

And so Burl came back to his tribe. He had left it nearly naked, with but a wisp of moth-wing twisted about his middle, a timid, fearful, trembling creature. He returned in triumph, walking slowly and fearlessly down a broad lane of golden mushrooms toward the hiding place of his people.

Upon his shoulders was draped a great and many-colored cloak made from the whole of a moth's wing. Soft fur was about his middle. A spear was in his hand and a fierce club at his waist. He and Saya bore between them the dead body of a huge spider—aforetime the dread of the pink-skinned, naked men. But to Burl the most important thing of all was that Saya walked beside him openly, acknowledging him before all the tribe.



May 14-June 18, 1921

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# THE BLIND SPOT

by Austin Hall and Homer Eon Flint

The origin of *The Blind Spot* was researched by Forrest J. Ackerman in the only known interview with Austin Hall, published in the June, 1933, SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST. "One day when Hall was with Homer Eon Flint, Hall held his finger up before one of his eyes and said, 'Couldn't a story be written about that blind spot in the eye?' Not much was said about it until four days later at lunch; then Hall outlined the whole classic to Flint; asked him if he'd like to write it with him.

"When the tale was complete, it stood first eighteen chapters written by Hall; nineteen to twenty-eight by Flint; the rest by Hall. Those having read it know it is supposed to be told by three different characters. This arrangement gave it the differentness required."

Austin Hall gave the date of his birth as "early 1880's" and he died in 1933. His first story was *Almost Immortal*, written while working on a ranch. "One of the cowboys picked up a story half-written," Hall said, "made me finish it. Those same waddies carried it into town, had it typewritten, and sent it to the editor of the old ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. The editor called it the damndest lie ever concocted, and bought it."

The redwood area of northern California was Hall's birthplace, and he claimed to have attended a string of schools: Ohio Northern, Ohio State, and the University of California. He became a newspaperman, then worked for a major electrical firm, but dissatisfied with the pay, shifted from place to place until the sale of *Almost Immortal* convinced him he should become a full-time writer.

Homer Eon Flint was four years younger than Austin Hall, and his last name was actually spelled Flindt. As a boy he read H. G. Wells avidly, and from his father received a deep interest in philosophical works.

When he sold his first story, *The Planeteer*, to ALL-STORY WEEKLY, Flint resided at 402 N. 13th Street, San Jose, California. He worked in an electric shoe repair shop and there met Austin Hall, who was to remain a close friend

the remainder of his life. Homer Eon Flint's death in 1924 was violent and mysterious. He was found dead under an automobile that had evidently gone off the road. The rear wheel of the car had broken off, and the axle was sticking through his stomach. His gun was found fifty feet from the car, and a complete set of burglar tools was in the back seat, with a ball of silk similar to that used in a bank robbery six weeks previously, when three men got away with \$350,000. The license plate of the car was that of a known gangster, several times in prison and two years later sent up for fifty years. When questioned, the gangster said that Flint had asked to be driven to Dublin's Canon and that a half-mile from the destination had forced him out at the point of a gun and driven off alone.

So many friends testified to Flint's integrity that the question of his involvement in crime was discarded, but there were other baffling facts, including three rings that had been removed from his fingers and found on the floor of the car.

"The last time I saw Homer alive," Hall said in a blurb accompanying the first installment of *The Spot of Life*, a sequel he had written alone to *The Blind Spot*, opening in ARGOSY, August 13, 1932, "we had just come back from a ride. It was a foggy night—two o'clock in the morning, weird and ghostly. Homer stepped away, into the mist—I can see him yet—his dim figure and his voice floating back to me: 'Well, so long. I'll speak to you from the Blind Spot.'"

Presented here are the first ten-thousand words of *The Blind Spot*, which almost makes a complete story in itself. Though the writing was done by Hall, the philosophical and medical aspects were believed to have been contributed by Homer Eon Flint.

Those who have read *The Blind Spot* in recent years find it difficult to determine the basis of its admitted popularity upon publication. The early portion with its emphasis on mystery rather than action, its gradual build-up of super-normal events involving several inexplicable disappearances, and its piecemeal introduction of related clues, pointing to a mind-staggering conclusion give it the same appeal as a detective story. Added to this is a pseudo-scientific explanation of another world on a separate plane, existing simultaneously with our own. Those interested in spiritualism interpreted the novel as the authors' attempt to confirm their faith, and from what little we know of Ausin Hall and Homer Eon Flint, they may have been close to the truth in that surmise. Both the approach and the concept were offbeat and original for that period and those factors were appreciated by the readers.

## 1. RHAMDA AVEC

ON A CERTAIN foggy morning in September, 1905, a tall man wearing a black overcoat and bearing in one hand a small satchel of dark-reddish leather, descended from a Geary Street car at the foot of Market Street,

San Francisco. It was a damp morning; a mist was brooding over the city blurring all distinctness, and even from the center of the loop the buildings facing East Street blurred in a dim, uncertain line.

The man glanced about him; a tall man of certain trim lines and distinctness and a quick, decided step and bearing. In the shuffle of descending passengers he was outstanding, a certain inborn grace that without the blood will never come from training. Men noticed and women out of instinct cast curious furtive glances and then turned away; which was natural, inasmuch as the man was plainly old. But for all that many ventured a second glance—and wondered.

An old man with the poise of twenty, a strange face of remarkable features, swarthy, of an Eastern cast, perhaps Indian; whatever the certainty of the man's age there was still a lingering suggestion of splendid youth. If one persisted in a third or fourth look this suggestion took almost a certain tone, the man's age dwindled, years dropped from him, and the quizzical smile that played on the lips seemed almost foreboding of boyish laughter.

We say foreboding because in this case it is not mistaken diction. Foreboding suggests coming evil; the laughter of boys is whole-hearted. It was merely that things were not exactly as they should be; it was not natural that age should be so youthful. The fates were playing, and in this case for once in the world's history their play was crosswise.

It is a remarkable case from the beginning and we are stating from facts. The man crossed to the window of the Key Route and purchased a ticket for Berkeley, after which, with the throng, he passed the turnstile and on to the boat that was waiting. He took the lower deck, not from choice, apparently, but more because the majority of his fellow passengers, being men, were bound in his direction. The same chance brought him to the cigar-stand. The men about him purchased cigars and cigarettes, and, as is the habit of all smokers, strolled off with delighted relish. The man watched them. Had any one noticed his eyes he would have noted a peculiar color and a light of surprise. With the prim step that made him so distinctive he advanced to the news-stand.

"Pardon me; but I would like to purchase one of those." Though he spoke perfect English it was in a strange manner, after the fashion of one who has found something that he has just learned how to use. At the same time he made a suggestion with his tapered fingers indicating the tobacco in the case and that already lighted by his companions. The clerk looked up.

"A cigar, sir? Yes, sir. What will it be?"

"A cigar?" Again the strange articulation. "Ah, yes, that is it. Now 1

remember. And it has a little sister, the cigarette. I think I shall take a cigarette, if—if—if you will show me how to use it."

It was a strange request. The clerk was accustomed to all manner of men and their brands of humor; he was about to answer in kind when he looked up and into the man's eyes. He started.

"You mean," he asked, "that you have never before seen a cigar or cigarette; that you do not know how to use them? A man as old as you are."

The stranger laughed. It was rather resentful, but for all of that of a hearty taint of humor.

"So old? Would you say that I am as old as that; if you will look again—"

The young man did and what he beheld is something that he could not quite account for: the strange conviction of this remarkable man; of age melting into youth, of an uncertain freshness, the smile, not of sixty, but of twenty. The young man was not one to argue, whatever his wonder; he was first of all a lad of business; he could merely acquiesce.

"The first time! This is the first time you have ever seen a cigar or cigarette?"

The stranger nodded.

"The first time. I have never beheld one of them before this morning. If you will allow me?" He indicated a package. "I think I shall take one of these."

The clerk took up the package, opened the end, and shook out a single cigarette. The man rolled it in his hand after the manner of the others; then he lighted it and, as the smoke poured out of his mouth, held the cigarette tentatively in his fingers.

"Like it?" It was the clerk who asked.

The other did not answer, his whole face was the expression of having just discovered one of the senses. He was a splendid man and, if the word may be employed of the sterner sex, one of beauty. His features were even: that is to be noted, his nose chiseled straight and to perfection, the eyes of a peculiar somberness and luster almost burning, of a black of such intensity as to verge into red and to be devoid of pupils, and yet, for all of that, of a glow and softness. After a moment he turned to the clerk.

"You are young, my lad."

"Twenty-one, sir."

"You are fortunate. You live in a wonderful age. It is as wonderful as your tobacco. And you still have many great things before you."

"Yes, sir."

The man walked on to the forward part of the boat; leaving the lad, who had been in a sort of daze, watching. But it was not for long. The whole thing had been strange and to the lad almost inexplicable. The man was not insane, he was certain; and he was just as sure that he had not been joking. From the start he had been taken by the man's refinement; he was one of intellect and education; he was positive that he had been sincere. Yet—

The ferry detective happened at that moment to be passing. The clerk made an indication with his thumb.

"That man yonder," he spoke, "the one in black. Watch him." Then he told his story. Whereat the detective laughed and walked forward.

It is a most fortunate incident. It was a strange case. That mere act of the cigar clerk placed the police on the track and gave to the world the only clue that it holds of the Blind Spot.

The detective had laughed at the lad's recital—most any one had a patent for being queer—and if this gentleman had a whim for a certain brand of humor that was his business. Nevertheless, he would stroll forward.

The man was not hard to distinguish; he was standing on the forward deck facing the wind and peering through the mist at the gray, heavy heave of the water. Alongside of them the dim shadow of a sister ferry screamed its way through the fogbank. That he was a landsman was evidenced by his way of standing; he was uncertain; at every heave of the boat he would shift sidewise. An unusually heavy roll caught him slightly off-balance and jostled him against the detective. The latter held up his hand and caught him by the arm.

"A bad morning," spoke the officer. "B-r-r-r! Did you notice the Yerba Buenna yonder? She just grazed us. A bad morning."

The stranger turned. As the detective caught the splendid face, the glowing eyes and the youthful smile, he started much as had done the cigar clerk. The same effect of age melting into youth and—the officer being much more accustomed to reading men—a queer sense of latent and potent vision. The eyes were soft and receptive, but for all that of the delicate strength and color that comes from abnormal intellect. He noted the pupils, black, glowing, of great size, almost filling the iris and the whole melting into intensity that verged into red. Either the man had been long without sleep or he was one of unusual intelligence and vitality.

"A nasty morning," repeated the officer.

"Ah! Er, yes—did you say it was a nasty morning? Indeed, I do not know, sir. However, it is very interesting."

"Stranger in San Francisco?"

"Well, yes. At least, I have never seen it."

"H-m!" The detective was a bit nonplussed by the man's evident evasion. "Well, if you are a stranger I suppose it is up to me to come to the defense of my city. This is one of Frisco's fogs. We have them occasionally. Sometimes they last for days. This one is a low one. It will lift presently. Then you will see the sun. Have you ever seen Frisco's sun?"

"My dear sir"—this same slow articulation—"I have never seen your sun nor any other."

"Hum!"

It was an answer altogether unexpected. Again the officer found himself gazing into the strange, refined face and wonderful eyes. The man was not blind, of that he was certain. Neither was his voice harsh nor testy. Rather was it soft and polite, of one merely stating a fact. Yet how could it be? He remembered the cigar clerk. Neither cigar nor sun! Of what manner of land could the man come from? A detective has a certain gift of intuition. Though on the face of it, outside of the man's personality, there could be nothing to it but a joke, he chose to act upon the impulse. He pulled back the door which had been closed behind them and reentered the boat. When he returned the boat arrived at the pier.

"You are going to Oakland?"

It was a chance question.

"No, to Berkeley. I take a train here, I understand. Do all the trains go to Berkeley?"

"By no means. I am going to Berkeley myself. We can ride together. My name is Jerome. Albert Jerome."

"Thanks. Mine is Avec. Rhamda Avec. I am much obliged. Your company may be instructive."

He did not say more; but watched with unrestrained interest their maneuver into the slip. A moment later they were marching with the others through the ways to the trains that were waiting. Just as they were seated and the electric was pulling out of the pier the sun breaking through the mist blazed with splendid light through the cloud rifts. The stranger was next to the window where he could look out over the water and beyond at the citted shoreline, whose sea of housetops extended and serried to the peaks of the first foot-hills. The sun was just coming over the mountains.

The detective watched. There was sincerity in the man's actions. It was not acting. When the light first broke he turned his eyes full into the radiance. It was the act of a child and, so it struck the officer, of the same trust and simplicity—and likewise the same effect. He drew away quickly; for a moment blinded.

"Ah!" he said. "It is so. This is the sun. Your sun is wonderful!"

"Indeed it is," returned the other. "But rather common. We see it every day. It's the whole works, but we get used to it. For myself I cannot see anything strange in the 'sun's still shining.' You have been blind, Mr. Avec? Pardon the question. But I must naturally infer. You say you have never seen the sun. I suppose—"

He stopped because of the other's smile; somehow it seemed a very superior one, as if predicting a wealth of wisdom.

"My dear Mr. Jerome," he spoke, "I have never been blind in my life. I say it is wonderful! It is glorious and past describing. So is it all, your water, your boats, your ocean. But I see there is one thing even stranger than Mill. It is yourselves. With all your greatness you are only part of your surroundings. Do you know what is your sun?"

"Search me," returned the officer. "I'm no astronomer. I understand they don't know themselves. Fire, I suppose, and a hell of a hot one! But there is one thing that I can tell."

"And this—"

"Is the truth."

If he meant it for insinuation it was ineffective. The other smiled kindly. In the fine effect of the delicate features, and most of all in the eyes was sincerity. In that face was the mark of genius—he felt it—and of a potent superior intelligence. Most of all did he note the beauty and the soft, silky superluster of the eyes.

We have the whole thing from Jerome, at least this part of it; and our interest being retrospect is multiplied far above that of the detective. The stranger had a certain call of character and of appearance, not to say magnetism. The officer felt himself almost believing and yet restraining himself into caution of unbelief. It was a remark preposterous on the face of it. What puzzled Jerome was the purpose; he could think of nothing that would necessitate such statements and acting. He was certain that the man was sane.

In the light of what came after great stress has been laid by a certain class upon this incident. We may say that we lean neither way. We have merely given it in some detail because of that importance. We have yet no proof of the mystic and, until it is proved, we must lean, like Jerome, upon the cold material. We have the mystery, but, even at that, we have not the certainty of murder.

Understand, it was intuition that led Jerome into that memorable trip to Herkclcy; he happened to be going off duty and was drawn to the man by a chance incident and the fact of his personality. At this minute, however, he thought no more of him than as an eccentric, as some refined, strange, wonderful gentleman with a whim for his own brand of humor.

Only that could explain it. The man had an evident curiosity for everything about him, the buildings, the street, the cars, and the people. Frequently he would mutter: "Wonderful, wonderful, and all the time we have never known it. Wonderful!"

As they drew into Lorin the officer ventured a question.

"You have friends in Berkeley. I see you are a stranger. If I may presume, perhaps I may be of assistance?"

"Well, yes, if—if—do you know of a Dr. Holcomb?"

"You mean the professor. He lives on Dwight Way. At this time of the day you would be more apt to find him at the university. Is he expecting you?"

It was a blunt question and of course none of his business. Yet, just what another does not want him to know is ever the pursuit of a detective. At the same time the subconscious flashing and wondering at the name Rhamda Avec—surely neither Teutonic nor Sanskrit nor anything between.

"Expecting me? Ah, yes. Pardon me if I speak slowly. I am not quite used to speech—yet. I see you are interested. After I see Dr. Holcomb I may tell you. However, it is very urgent that I see the doctor. He—well, I may say that we have known each other a long time."

"Then you know him?"

"Yes, in a way; though we have never met. He must be a great man. We have much in common, your doctor and I; and we have a great deal to give to your world. However, I would not recognize him should I see him. Would you by any chance—"

"You mean would I be your guide? With pleasure. It just occurs that I am on friendly terms with your friend Dr. Holcomb."

## 2. THE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AND NOW TO start in on another angle.

There is hardly any necessity for introducing Dr. Holcomb. All of us, at least, those who read, and, most of all, those of us who are interested in any manner of speculation, knew him quite well. He was the professor of philosophy at the University of California: a great man and a good one, one of those fine academic souls who, not only by their wisdom, but by their character, have a way of stamping themselves upon generations; a speaker of the upstanding class, walking on his own feet and utterly fearless when it came to dashing out on some startling philosophy that had not been borne up by his forebears.

He was original. He believed that the philosophies of the ages are but stepping stones, that the wisdoms of the earth looked but to (he



future, and that the study of the classics, however essential, are but the ground work for combining and working out the problems of the future. He was epigrammatic, terse, and gifted with a quaint humor with which he was apt, even when in the driest philosophy, to drive in and clinch his argument.

Best of all, he was able to clothe the most abstract thoughts in language so simple and concrete that he brought the deepest of all subjects down to the scope of the commonest thinker. It is needless to say that he was copy. The papers about the bay were ever and anon running some startling story of the professor.

Had they stuck to the text it would all have been well; but a reporter is a reporter; in spite of the editors there were numerous little elaborations to pervert the context. A great man must be careful of his speech. Dr. Holcomb was often busy refuting; he could not understand the need of these little twistings of wisdom. It kept him in controversy; the brothers of his profession often took him to task for these little distorted scraps of philosophy. He did not like journalism. He had a way of consigning all writers and editors to the devil.

Which was vastly amusing to the reporters. Once they had him going they poised their pens in glee and began splashing their venomous ink. It was tragic; the great professor standing at bay to his tormentors. One and all they loved him and one and all they took delight in his torture. It was a hard task for a reporter to get in at a lecture; and yet it was often the lot of the professor to find himself and his words featured in his breakfast paper.

On the very day before this the doctor had come out with one of his terse startling statements. He had a way of inserting parenthetically some of his scraps of wisdom. It was in Ethics 2b. We quote his words as near as possible:

"Man, let me tell you, is egotistic. All our philosophy is based on ego. We live threescore years and we balance it with all eternity. We are il. Did you ever stop and think of eternity? It is a rather long time. What right have we to say that life, which we assume to be everlasting, immediately becomes retrospect once it passes out of the conscious individuality which it is allotted upon this earth? The trouble is ourselves. We are live-sensed. We weigh everything with our senses. Everything! We so measure eternity. Until we step out into other senses, which undoubtedly exists, we shall never arrive at the conception of infinity. Now I am going to make a rather startling announcement.

"The past few years have promised a culmination which has been (messed at and yearned for since the beginning of time. It is within, and still without, the scope of metaphysics. Those of you who have

attended my lectures have heard me call myself the Material Idealist. I am a mystic sensationalist. I believe that we can derive nothing from pure contemplation. There is mystery and wonder in the veil of the occult. The earth, our life, is merely a vestibule of the universe. Contemplation alone will hold us all as inapt and as impotent as the old Monks of Athos. We have mountains of literature behind us, all contemplative, and whatever its wisdom, it has given us not one thing outside of the abstract. From Plato down to the present our philosophy has given us not one tangible proof, not one concrete fact which we can place our hands on. We are virtually where we were originally; and we can talk, talk, talk from now until the clap of doomsday.

"What then?

"My friends, philosophy must take a step sidewise. In this modern age young science, practical science, has grown up and far surpassed us. We must go back to the beginning, forget our subjective musings and enter the concrete. We are five-sensed, and in the nature of things we must bring the proof down into the concrete where we can understand it. Can we pierce the nebulous screen that shuts us out of the occult? We have doubted, laughed at ourselves and been laughed at; but the fact remains that always we have persisted in the believing.

"I have said that we shall never, never understand infinity while within the limitations of our five senses. I repeat it. But that does not infer that we shall never solve some of the mystery of life. The occult is not only a supposition, but a fact. We have peopled it with terror, because, like our forebears before Columbus, we have peopled it with imagination.

"And now to my statement.

"I have called myself the Material Idealist. I have adopted an entirely new trend of philosophy. During the past years, unknown to you and unknown to my friends, I have allied myself with practical science. I desired something concrete. While my colleagues and others were pounding out tomes of wonderful sophistry I have been pounding away at the screen of the occult. This is a proud moment. I have succeeded. Tomorrow I shall bring to you the fact and the substance. I have lifted up the curtain and flooded it with the light of day. You shall have the fact for your senses. Tomorrow I shall explain it all. I shall deliver my greatest lecture; in which my whole life has come to a focus. It is not spiritualism nor sophistry. It is concrete fact and common sense. The subject of my lecture tomorrow will be: 'The Blind Spot.' "

Here begins the second part of the mystery.

We know now that the great lecture was never delivered. Immedi-

atcly the news was scattered out of the class-room upon the campus. It became common property. It was spread over the country and was featured in all the great metropolitan dailies. In the lecture-room next morning seats were at a premium; students, professors, instructors and all the prominent people who could gain admission crowded into the hall; even (he irrepressible reporters had stolen in to take down this greatest scoop of the century. The place was jammed until even standing room was imthought of. The crowd, dense and packed and physically uncomfortable, waited.

The minutes dragged by. It was a long, long wait. But at last the bell rang that ticked the hour. Every one was expectant. And then fifteen minutes passed by, twenty—the crowd settled down to waiting. At length one of the colleagues stepped into the doctor's office and telephoned to his home. His daughter answered.

"Papa? Why he left over two hours ago for the campus."

"About what time?"

"Why, it was about seven-thirty. You know he was to deliver his lecture today on the Blind Spot. I wanted to hear it, but he told me I could have it at home. He said he was to have a wonderful guest and I must make ready to receive him. Isn't papa there?"

"Not yet. Who was this guest? Did he say?"

"Oh, yes! In a way. A most wonderful man. And he gave him a wonderful name, Rhamda Avec. I remember because it is so funny. I asked papa if he was Sanskrit; and he said he was much older than Ihat. Iust imagine!"

"Did your father have his lecture with him?"

"Oh, yes. He glanced over it at breakfast. He told me he was going to startle the world as it had never been since the day of Columbus."

"Indeed."

"Yes. And he was terribly impatient. He said he had to be at the college before eight to receive the great man. He was to deliver his lecture at ten. And afterward he would have lunch at noon and he would give me the whole story. I am all impatience."

"Thank you."

Then he came back and made the announcement that there was a little delay; but that Dr. Holcomb would be there shortly. But he was not. At twelve o'clock there were still some people waiting. At one o'clock the last man had slipped out of the room—and wondered. In all the country there was but one person who knew. That one was an obscure man who had yielded to a detective's intuition and had fallen inadvertently upon one of (he greatest mysteries of modern times.

### 3. "NOW THERE ARE TWO"

THE REST OF the story is unfortunately all too easily told. We go back to Jerome and his strange companion.

At Center Street station they alighted and walked up to the campus. Under the Le Conte oaks they met the professor. He was trim and happy, his short, well-built figure clothed in black, his snow-white whiskers trimmed to the usual square crop and his pink skin glowing with splendid health. The fog had by this time lifted and the sun was just beginning to overcome the chilliness of the air; on the elevation beyond them the buildings of the great university; and back of it all the huge C upon the face of Charter Hill. There was no necessity for an introduction.

The two men apparently recognized each other at once. So we have it from the detective. There was sincerity in the delight of their hand-clasp. A strange pair, both of them with the distinction and poise that come from refinement and intellectual training; though in physique they were almost opposite, there was still a strange, almost mutual, bond between them. The professor was short, well-set, and venerable; his white hairs matched well the dignity of his wisdom. The other was tall, lithe, graceful, and of that illusive poise that blended into youthfulness. His hair was black; his features well cut, and of the slightly swarthy tinge that suggested an Eastern extraction. Unlike the professor, his face was smooth; he had no trace of beard and very little evidence that he could grow one. Dr. Holcomb was beaming.

"At last!" he greeted. "At last! I was sure we could not fail. This, my dear Dr. Avec, is the greatest day since Columbus."

The other took the hand.

"So this is the great Dr. Holcomb. Yes, indeed, it is a great day; though I know nothing about your Columbus. So far it has been simply wonderful. I can scarcely credit my senses. So near and yet so far. How can it be? A dream? Are you sure, Dr. Holcomb?"

"My dear Rhamda, I am sure that I am the happiest man that ever lived. It is the culmination. I was certain we could not fail; though, of course, to me also it is an almost impossible climax of fact. I should never have succeeded without your assistance."

The other smiled.

"That was of small account, my dear doctor. To yourself must go the credit; to me the pleasure. Take your sun, for instance, I—but I have not the language to tell you."

But the doctor had gone to abstraction.

"A great day," he was beaming. "A great day! What will the world say? It is proved." Then suddenly: "You have eaten?"

"Not yet. You must allow me a bit of time. I thought of it; but I had not quite the courage to venture."

"Then we shall eat," said the other man. "Afterward we shall go up to the lecture-room. Today I shall deliver my lecture on the Blind Spot. And when I am through you shall deliver the words that will astonish the world."

But here it seems there was a hitch. The other shook his head kindly. It was evident that while the doctor was the leader the other was a co-worker who must be considered.

"I am afraid, professor, that you have promised a bit too much. I am not entirely free yet, you know. Two hours is the most that I can give you; and not entirely that. There are some details that may not be neglected. It is a far venture and now that we have succeeded this far there is surely no reason why we cannot go on. However, it is necessary that I return to the house on Chatterton Place. I have but slightly over an hour left."

The doctor was plainly disappointed.

"But the lecture?"

"It means my life, professor, and the subsequent success of our experiment. A few details, a few minutes. Perhaps if we hurry we can get back in time."

The doctor glanced at his watch. "Twenty minutes for the train, twenty for the boat, ten minutes; that's an hour, two hours. These details? Have you any idea how long, Rhamda?"

"Perhaps not more than fifteen minutes."

"We have still two hours. Fifteen minutes; perhaps a little bit late. Tell you what. I shall go with you. You can eat upon the boat."

We have said that the detective had intuition. He had it still. Yet he had no rational reason for suspecting either the professor or his strange companion. Furthermore he had never heard of the Blind Spot in any way whatsoever; nor did he know a single thing of philosophy or anything else in Holcomb's teaching. He knew the doctor as a man of eminent standing and respectability. It was hardly natural that he should suspect anything sinister to grow out of this meeting of two refined scholars. He attached no great importance to the trend of their conversation. It was strange to be sure; but he felt, no doubt, that living in their own world they had a way and a language of their own. He was no scholar.

Still, he could think. The man Rhamda had made an assertion that he

could not quite uncover. It puzzled him. As we say, he had intuition. Something told him that for the safety of his old friend it might be well for him to shadow the strange pair to the city.

When the next train pulled out for the pier the two scholars were seated in the forward part of the car. In the last seat was a man deeply immersed in a morning paper.

It is rather unfortunate. In the natural delicacy of the situation Jerome could not crowd too closely. He had no certainty of trouble; no proof whatever; he was known to the professor. The best he could do was to keep aloof and follow their movements. At the ferry building they hailed a taxi and started up Market Street. Jerome watched them. In another moment he had another driver and was winding behind in their wheel tracks. The cab made straight for Chatterton Place. In front of a substantial two-story house it drew up. The two old men alighted. Jerome's taxi passed them.

They were then at the head of the steps; a woman of slender beauty with a wonderful loose fold of black hair was talking. It seemed to the detective that her voice was fearful, of a pregnant warning, that she was protesting. Nevertheless, the old men entered and the door slammed behind them. Jerome slipped from the taxi and spoke a few words to the chauffeur. A moment later the two men were holding the house under surveillance.

They did not have long to wait. The man called Rhamda had asked for fifteen minutes. At the stroke of the second the front door reopened. Some one was laughing; a melodious enchanting laugh and feminine. A woman was speaking. And then two forms in the doorway. A man and a woman. The man was Rhamda Avec, tall, immaculate, black clad and distinguished. The woman, Jerome was not certain that she was the same who opened the door or not; she was even more beautiful. She was laughing. Like her companion she was clad in black, a beautiful shimmering material which sparkled in the sun like the rarest silk. The man glanced carelessly up and down the street for a moment. Then he assisted the lady down the steps and into the taxi. The door slammed; and before the detective could gather his scattered wits they were lost in the city.

Jerome was expecting the professor. Naturally when the door opened he looked for the old gentleman and his companion. It was the doctor he was watching, not the other. Though he had no rational reason for expecting trouble he had still his hunch and his intuition. The man and woman aroused suspicion; and likewise upset his calculation. He could not follow (hem and stay with the professor. It was a moment for quick decision. He wondered. Where was Dr. Holcomb? This was the day he

was to deliver his lecture on the Blind Spot. He had read the announcement in the paper coming over on the boat, together with certain comments by the editor. In the lecture itself there was mystery. This strange one, Rhamda, was mixed in the Blind Spot. Undoubtedly he was the essential fact and substance. Until now he had not scented tragedy. Why had Rhamda and the woman come out together? Where was the professor?

Where indeed?

At the end of a half-hour Jerome ventured across the street. He noted the number 288. Then he ascended the steps and clanged at the knocker. From the sounds that came from inside, the place was but partly furnished. Hollow steps sounded down the hallway, shuffling, like weary bones dragging slippers. The door opened and an old woman, very old, peered out of the crack. She coughed. Though it was not a loud cough it seemed to the detective that it would be her last one; there was so little of her.

"Pardon me, but is Dr. Holcomb here?"

The old lady looked up at him. The eyes were of a blank expressionless blue; she was in her dotage.

"You mean—oh, yes, I think so, the pretty man with the white whiskers. He was here a few minutes ago, with that other. But he just went out, sir, he just went out."

"No, I don't think so. There was a man went out and a woman. But not Dr. Holcomb."

"A woman? There was no woman."

"Oh, yes, there was a woman—a very beautiful one."

The old lady dropped her hand. It was trembling.

"Oh, dear," she was saying. "This makes two. This morning it was a man and now it is a woman, that makes two."

It seemed to the man as he looked down in her eyes that he was looking into great fear; she was so slight and frail and helpless and so old; such a fragile thing to bear burden and trouble. Her voice was cracked and just above a shrill whisper, almost uncanny. She kept repeating:

"Now there are two. Now there are two. That makes two. This morning there was one. Now there are two."

Jerome could not understand. He pitied the old lady.

"Did you say that Dr. Holcomb is here?"

Again she looked up: the same blank expression, she was evidently trying to gather her wits.

"Two. A woman. Dr. Holcomb. Oh, yes. Dr. Holcomb. Won't you come in?"

She opened the door.

Jerome entered and took off his hat. Judicially he repeated the doctor's name to keep it in her mind. She closed the door carefully and touched his arm. It seemed to him that she was terribly weak and tottering; her old eyes, however expressionless, were full of pitiful pleading. She was scarcely more than a shadow.

"You are his son?"

Jerome lied; but he did it for a reason. "Yes."

"Then come."

She took him by the sleeve and led him to a room, then across it to a door in the side wall. Her step was slow and tottering; twice she stopped to sing the dirge of her wonder. "First a man and then a woman. Now there is one. You are his son." And twice she stopped and listened. "Do you hear anything? A bell? I love to hear it: and then afterward I am afraid. Did you ever notice a bell? It always makes you think of church and the things that are holy. This is a beautiful bell—first—"

Either the woman was without her reason or very nearly so: she was very weak and tottering.

"Come, mother, I know, first a bell, but Dr. Holcomb?"

The name brought her back again. For a moment she was blank trying to recall her senses. And then she remembered. She pointed to the door.

"In there—Dr. Holcomb. That's where they come. That's where they go. Dr. Holcomb. The little old man with the beautiful whiskers. This morning it was a man; now it is a woman. Now there are two. Oh, dear; perhaps we shall hear the bell."

Jerome began to scent a tragedy. Certainly the old lady was uncanny; the house was bare and hollow; the scant furniture was threadbare with age and mildew; each sound was exaggerated and fearful, even their breathing. He placed his hand on the knob and opened the door.

"Now there are two. Now there are two."

The room was empty. Not a bit of furniture; a blank, bare apartment with an old-fashioned high ceiling. Nothing else. Whatever the weirdness and adventure Jerome was getting nowhere. The old lady was still clinging to his arm and still droning:

"Now there are two. Now there are two. This morning a man; now a woman. Now there are two."

"Come, mother, come. This will not do. Perhaps—"

But just then the old lady's lean fingers clinched into his arm; her eyes grew bright; her mouth opened and she stopped in the middle of her drone. Jerome grew rigid. And no wonder. From the middle of the room not ten feet away came the tone of a bell, a great silvery volu-



minous sound—and music. A church bell. Just one stroke, full toned, filling all the air till the whole room was choked with music. Then as suddenly it died out and runed into nothing. At the same time he felt the fingers on his arm relax; and a heap at his feet. He reached over. The life and intelligence that was so near the line was just crossing over the border. The poor old lady! Here was a tragedy he could not understand. He stooped over to assist her. He was trembling. As he did so he heard the drone of her soul as it wafted to the shadow:

"Now there are two."

#### 4. GONE

JEROME WAS A strong man, of iron nerve, and well set against emotion; in the run of his experience he had been plumped into many startling situations; but none like this. The croon of the old lady thrummed in his ears with endless repetition. He picked her up tenderly and bore her to another room and placed her on a ragged sofa. There were still marks on her face of former beauty. He wondered who she was and what had been her life to come to such an ending.

"Now there are two," the words were withering with oppression. Subconsciously he felt the load that crushed her spirit. It was as if the burden had been shifted; he sensed the weight of an unaccountable disaster.

The place was musty and ill-lighted. He looked about him, the dank, close air was unwashed by daylight. A stray ray of sunshine filtering through the broken shutter slanted across the room and sought vainly to dispel the shadow. He thought of Dr. Holcomb. Dr. Holcomb and the old lady. "Now there are two." Was it a double tragedy? First of all he must investigate.

The place was of eleven rooms, six downstairs and five on the upper story. With the exception of one broken chair there was no furniture upstairs; four of the rooms on the lower floor were partly furnished, two not at all. A rear room had evidently been to the old lady the whole of her habitation, serving as kitchen, bedroom, and living-room combined. Except in this room there were no carpets whatever. His steps sounded hollow and ghostly; the boards creaked and each time he opened a door he was oppressed by the same gloom of dankness and stagnation. There was no trace of Dr. Holcomb.

lie remembered the bell and sought vainly on both floors for anything that would give him a clue to the sound. There was nothing. The only thing he heard was the echoing of his own creaking footsteps and the unceasing blur that thrummed in his spirit, "Now there are two."

At last he came to the door and looked out into the street. The sun was shining and the life and pulse was rising from the city. It was daylight; plain, healthy day. It was good to look at. On the threshold of the door he felt himself standing on the border of two worlds. What had become of the doctor and who was the old lady; and lastly and just as important who was the Rhamda and his beautiful companion?

Jerome telephoned to headquarters.

It is a strange case.

At the precise minute when his would-be auditors were beginning to fidget over his absence the police of San Francisco had started the search for the great doctor. Jerome had followed his intuition. It had led him into a tragedy and he was ready to swear almost on his soul that it was twofold. The prominence of the professor, together with his startling announcement of the day previous and the world-wide comment that it had aroused, elevated the case to a national interest.

Dr. Holcomb had promised to tear away the veil of the occult. He was not a man to talk idly. The world had long regarded him as one of its greatest thinkers. It was a mystery that had shrouded over the ages. Since man first blubbered out of apehood he had fought with this great riddle of infinity. And now, in the lecture on the Blind Spot, was promised the great solution; and not only the solution, but the fact, and substance to back it.

What was the Blind Spot? The world conjectured, and, like the world has been since beginning, it scoffed and derided. Some there were, however, men well up in the latest discoveries of science, who did not laugh. They counseled forbearance; they would wait for the doctor and his lecture.

There was no lecture. In the teeth of our expectation came the startling word that the doctor had disappeared. Apparently when on the very verge of announcing his discovery he had been swallowed by the very force that he had loosened. There was nothing in known science, outside of optics, that could in any way be blended with the Blind Spot. There were but two solutions; either the professor had been a victim of a clever rogue, or he had been overcome by the rashness of his own wisdom. At any rate, it was known from that minute on as "THE BLIND SPOT."

Perhaps it is just as well to take up the findings of the police. The police of course eluded from the beginning any suggestion of the occult. They are material; and were convinced from the start that the case had its origin in downright villainy. Man is complex; but being so, is oft overbalanced by evil. Some genius had made a fool of the doctor.

In (he first place a thorough search was made for the professor. The

place at No. 288 Chatterton Place was ransacked from cellar to attic. The records were gone over and it was found that the property had for some time been vacant; that the real ownership was vested in a number of heirs scattered about the country.

The old lady had apparently been living on the place simply through sufferance. No one could find out who she was. A few tradesmen in the vicinity had sold her some scant supplies and that was all. The stress that Jerome placed upon her actions and words was given due account of. There were undoubtedly two villains; but also there were two victims. That the old lady was such as well as the professor no one has doubted. The whole secret lay in the strange gentleman with the Eastern cast and complexion. Who was Rhamda Avec?

And now comes the strangest part of the story. Ever, when we recount the tale there is something to overturn the theories of the police. It has become a sort of legend in San Francisco; one to be taken with a grain of salt, to be sure, but for all that, one at which we may well wonder. Here the supporters of the professor's philosophy hold their strongest point—if it is true. Of course we can venture no private opinion, never having witnessed. It is this:

Rhamda Avec is with us and in our city. His description and drawn likeness has been published many times. There are those who aver that they have seen him in the reality of the flesh walking through the crowds of Market Street.

He is easily distinguished, tall and distinctive, refined to an ultra degree, and with the poise and alertness of a gentleman of reliance and character. Women look twice and wonder; he is neither old nor young; when he smiles it is like youth breaking in laughter. And with him often is his beautiful companion.

Men vouch for her beauty and swear that it is of the super kind that drives to distraction. She is fire and flesh and carnal—she is superbeauty. There is allurement about her body; sylphlike, sinuous; the olive tint of her complexion, the wonderful glory of her hair and the glowing night-black of her eyes. Men pause; she is of the superlative kind that robs the reason, a supreme glory of passion and life and beauty, at whose feet fools and wise men would slavishly frolic and folly. She seldom speaks, but those who have heard her say that it is like rippling water, of gentleness and softness and of the mellow flow that comes from love and passion and from beauty.

Of course there is nothing out of the ordinary in their walking down the streets. Anybody might do that. The wonder comes in the manner in which they elude the police. They come and go in the broad, bright daylight. Hundreds have seen (hem. They make no effort at concealment.

nor disguise. And yet no fantoms were ever more unreal than they to those who seek them. Who are they? The officers have been summoned on many occasions; but each and every time in some manner or way they have contrived to elude them. There are some who have consigned them to the limbo of illusion. But we do not entirely agree.

In a case like this it is well to take into consideration the respectability and character of those who have witnessed. Fantoms are not corporeal; these two are flesh and blood. There is mystery about them; but they are substance, the same as we are. All the secrets of the universe have not been unriddled by any means. We believe in Dr. Holcomb; and whether it was murder or mystery, we do not think we shall solve it until we have discovered the laws and the clues that led the great doctor up to the Blind Spot.

And lastly:

If you will take the Key Route ferry some foggy morning you may see something to convince you. It must be foggy and the air must be gray and drab and somber. Take the lower deck. Perhaps you shall see nothing. If not try again; for they say you shall be rewarded. Watch the forward part of the boat; but do not leave the inner deck. The great Rhamda watching the gray swirl of the water!

He stands alone, in his hands the case of reddish leather, his feet slightly apart and his face full of a great hungry wonder. Watch his features; they are strong and aglow with a great and wondrous wisdom; mark if you see evil. And, remember. Though he is like you he is something vastly different. He is flesh and blood; but perhaps the master of one of the greatest laws that man can attain to. He is the fact and the substance that was promised, but was not delivered by the professor.

A History of  
"The Scientific Romance"  
in the Munsey Magazines,  
1912-1920



# A HISTORY OF "THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE" IN THE MUNSEY MAGAZINES, 1912-1920

by Sam Moskowitz.

## 1. THE DISCOVERY OF EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

ALL THE WORLD is familiar with the novel *Tarzan of the Apes*, and literally tens of millions of the world's people recognize the name of its author, Edgar Rice Burroughs. A substantial number are aware that he wrote stories other than Tarzan, most of them science fiction with locales on Mars, Venus, the Moon, Jupiter, the interior of the Earth, and planets surrounding other stars. Very few realize that he supplanted H. G. Wells as the world's front-running science-fiction writer and outdistanced another contemporary science-fiction-master, A. Conan Doyle (*The Lost World*, 1912; *The Poison Belt*, 1913), by so great a margin in both quantity and popularity that even if Doyle had wished to enter into a deliberate competition, it is doubtful that he could have overtaken him.

Following the appearance of his first published work of fiction, *Under the Moons of Mars*, in THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE (February-July, 1912), Burroughs turned the entire direction of science fiction from prophecy and sociology to romantic adventure, made the major market for such work the all-fiction pulp magazines, and became the major influence on the field through to 1934.

Edgar Rice Burroughs carried no illusion of rhetorical grandeur when he first evaluated seriously the potential of a literary career. Reasonably acquainted with the popular magazines of the day, he read their fiction, analyzed their policies, and determined that considering the type of thing he planned to write, a scientific romance, his best hope lay with the all-fiction pulps. These were magazines that carried little or no nonfiction; usually unrelieved by illustrations (because of their rough paper), they

crammed page after page of solid type with adventure, human interest, and romance. The number of such magazines was increasing, but the group most likely to accept a highly fantastic romantic adventure was the Munsey pulps. Of that group, the magazine that ran such stories most regularly was THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, so that would be his target.

"I had good reason for thinking I could sell what I wrote," Edgar Rice Burroughs stated in a by-lined feature article for THE SUNDAY WORLD MAGAZINE, October 27, 1929. "I had gone thoroughly through some of the all-fiction magazines, and made up my mind that if people were paid for writing rot such as I read I could write stories just as rotten. ... I knew absolutely that I could write stories just as entertaining and probably a lot more so than any I chanced to read in those magazines."

The motivation for writing was not the challenge, not the subconscious love of it, but sheer, utter, and driving despair. Burroughs had missed his mark in a dozen diverse occupations in scattered areas of the country. There were two children to support, and he had already pawned the wife's jewelry and his watch. His last venture, a mail-order business, had failed miserably, and he was working out of borrowed space as an agent for a pencil-sharpener company.

It has never been made clear how many back issues of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE he had read, or whether the "rotten" stories he was referring to were science fiction.

Had he read *The Cave of the Glittering Lamps* (October, 1910-January, 1911), a five-part novel of the tunnels of a subterranean city carved out of a Persian mountain, whose golden grandeur outdated the Bible, written by a twenty-seven-year-old, Ludwig Lewisohn, then struggling to build a literary reputation? The ancient priests bent on their sacrifices to the Sun God were deliberately calculated to provide thrills and were a far cry from the scholarship of Lewisohn's translations, later books on world literature, or novels of the Jews that later brought him attention.

Burroughs' contempt for *The Monkey Man* (September, 1910-January 1911), by William Tillinghast Eldridge, a stalwart of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, would be more understandable. Eldridge had taken the potentially fascinating idea of an immensely powerful apelike man, who swung through trees, to the terror of a couple cast away on a tropical island, and reduced it to an ordinary and eminently forgettable episode. It may well be that *Tarzan of the Apes* owes its genesis as much to that poorly cast story as it does to the legend of Romulus and Remus or



to the *Jungle Books* of Rudyard Kipling, hitherto regarded as the most probable sources.

It is not as likely that his reading had extended as far back as the issues of January-June, 1909, which featured *A Columbus of Space* by the popular astronomer and journalist Garrett P. Serviss. Had he read it, he probably could not have treated with proper respect a novel written in 1908 in which atomic energy derived from uranium is used to power a space ship to Venus. But he was not likely to have scoffed at the fascinating space scenes, the exploration of Venus with its dark-side and light-side humanoid cultures, its strange monsters and lovable pets. The description of the great clouds parting once in a lifetime to reveal the face of a gigantic, merciless sun is not to be demeaned, particularly when the effect of the rays that pour down is to drive all inhabitants mad. A much more sophisticated use of the idea in *Nightfall* (ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION, September, 1941) had raised Isaac Asimov to the rank of a major figure in the field of science fiction. The idea had been suggested to him by John W. Campbell, the magazine's editor (attributed to a stanza from Ralph Waldo Emerson) who *had* read *A Columbus of Space* when it was reprinted in AMAZING STORIES, August-October, 1926. In *Nightfall*, a world is hypothesized where the stars appear only once in a thousand years, and each time it happens the population is rendered insane and civilization falls. The closest similarity to this concept in a Burroughs story occurs in *The Pirates of Venus* (ARGOSY, September 17-October 22, 1932), where occasional rifts in the clouds burn up vegetation and destroy life.

Edgar Rice Burroughs had the pack-rat instinct and kept virtually every letter he ever received and carbons of those he sent in perfect order. These records show no submission or correspondence regarding the first draft of *Under the Moons of Mars* prior to August 14, 1911. It was on that date that he mailed forty-three thousand words of an unfinished manuscript titled *Dejah Thoris, Martian Princess*, to THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE at 175 Fifth Avenue, New York City. A businessman from the beginning, he asked to retain book rights if the manuscript was accepted, and requested that the story be published under the pen name of Normal Bean (which name he bracketed under his own on the letter).

Ten days later, August 24, 1911, Thomas Newell Metcalf, for years managing editor of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE under Robert H. Davis, replied asking that the story be lengthened to seventy thousand words and that the early portion be condensed to speed up the action. Edgar Rice Burroughs, who was residing at 222 W. Kin/ic St., Chicago, a two-

day mail trip away, must have responded almost instantly, because his reply was dated August 26, 1911, requesting rates of payment from Metcalf and informing him that his sole motive for writing the story was that he needed the money it might bring and that there was no sentiment involved, "although I became very much interested in it while writing."

It would appear highly likely that since the manuscript was submitted unfinished, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was its first and only recipient. That would indicate a remarkable market evaluation on the part of Burroughs, particularly since his initial work was science fiction. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, from its inception with the January, 1905, issue, had given science fiction a very heavy representation among the novels as well as the short stories. Burroughs writing his first story in a fantastic and imaginative format may have been no coincidence.

The average rate of pay of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was five to ten dollars per thousand words, depending upon the reputation of the author and the quality of the work, Metcalf told Burroughs in his reply of August 28, 1911. In more specific terms, it was one-half to one cent a word. The big popular magazines of the period, THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, COLLIER'S, HAMPTON'S, EVERYBODY'S, and COSMOPOLITAN, paid substantially more even then. O. Henry had an agreement with Robert H. Davis to give him first look at each new short story submitted to MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and if accepted the rate of pay was ten cents a word. Authors of fame and following like Jack London, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Rudyard Kipling, and Robert W. Chambers could negotiate their own rates and frequently made far more money for magazine serialization of a novel than from book royalties. For the rest, even among the mass-circulation slicks enjoying heavy advertising revenue, a one-cent-a-word rate was acceptable and anything above that was a real marketing coup.

What Metcalf did not tell Burroughs, but a fact sometimes even more important than the rate, was the promptness of payment. The Frank A. Munsey Company, through all of its successful period, paid virtually on acceptance. Such a policy was not common with many important magazines of the era.

Edgar Rice Burroughs mailed in a completed manuscript of sixty-three thousand words on September 28, 1911, which was acknowledged by Metcalf on October 6.

Metcalf made an offer of four hundred dollars to Burroughs on November 4, agreed to release book rights as previously requested, but asked for references as a check against plagiarism. He also urged that Burroughs try his hand at a historical novel along the lines of Sir Waller Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

Burroughs mailed an acceptance of the terms on November 6 and acknowledged receipt of the check for four hundred dollars on November 17, but at the same time asked for better rates on future stories.

The final title of the story was decided by Metcalf, who entertained at least one variant before finalizing it in his mind, writing Burroughs on November 20 that he was going to call it *In the Moons of Mars*. The story opened in the February, 1912, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE as *Under the Moons of Mars* and led off the issue. It did not receive the cover, which, painted by Gordon Grant, illustrated no story in the issue but showed a black-sombreroed Mexican, elbow on an open window, lighting a cigarette. Up until July, 1911, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE had carried no interior illustrations. With that issue it commenced to present effective illustrated story titles, and *Under the Moons of Mars* received a sketch outlining a six-limbed Martian with horn-shaped ears, standing with his spear against the horizon of his planet. It was the policy of the magazine to use the same cut on each installment of a serial, so for the six issues from February through to July, 1912, this small illustration came to symbolize Burroughs. For the next few years, the peculiar, cartoon-style Martian would become a trademark of the Martian series, being commented upon editorially and even appearing in full color on later covers.

The artist did not sign his name to it, so it probably was not Clinton Pettee, J. Norman Lynd,\* Fairchild, or the artist who initialed himself "M.S." Whoever he was, upon receiving the assignment he was given the author's name as Normal Bean, the editors having failed to recognize that the pen name "Norma/ Bean" was a disclaimer. Since "bean" was then popular slang for "head," leading to the coining of the term "bean ball" to indicate a baseball pitcher who deliberately throws at a batter's head, Burroughs was trying to tell the readers that, despite his imagination, he was perfectly normal.

The artist *hand-lettered* the title and author's name around his illustration. Once an engraving was made, it was too late to change it. Had the name been hand-set, the error could have been caught in proofreading, or at least with a succeeding installment of the serial. It ended up appearing on all six parts of the story.

To shorten the early part of the novel, which established the back-

\* J. Norman Lynd contributed a cartoon to a 1916 issue of the weekly *Life*, depicting Frank A. Munsey, owner of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, as a gravedigger, burying the many newspapers he bought and then discarded. When Munsey bought I'm. NrW YORK IIRAIID in 1920, one of his first acts was to fire Lynd, who was working for Ilial paper as a cartoonist, lie may never have been aware thai l.yml had been a widely used illusrator of his own magazines.

ground of the lead character, John Carter, the editor, eliminated a one thousand four hundred-word preface and rewrote it to occupy only two hundred and fifty words. Paragraphs were shortened, and there was minor revision in various portions of the novel. When it eventually appeared in hardcovers under the title *A Princess of Mars*, published by A. C. McClurg & Co. in October, 1917, the original preface was restored, none of the editorial changes were incorporated, and even the author's own paragraphing was reinstated. Throughout his career Burroughs, whether graciously or begrudgingly agreeing to change, would figuratively lift his thumb to his nose and waggle his fingers at the editor when the time came to put his work into book form.

Readers of the February, 1912, issue of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE were told in an "Editor's Note" that the lead character of *Under the Moons of Mars* was named John Carter, was of indeterminate age, had served four years in the Confederate Army, and had been honorably discharged. He had risen to captain in that service, and was a man two inches over six feet in height with the build of an athlete. He disappears from sight of man for more than fifteen years, then returns to the palisades of the Hudson River, where he is eventually found dead in the snow, and his body is consigned without embalming to a vault.

A manuscript is left to Edgar Rice Burroughs as the executor of his estate, and it is its content which the readers of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE now read.

After discharge from the Confederate forces, Captain John Carter sets out on a prospecting trip to the West. In a flight from hostile Indians, he enters a cave and is rendered unconscious by some factor in the air of the natural chamber. When he comes to, he finds that he is separated from his body, which is resting prone on the cavern floor. Emerging, he sees the tiny red orb of Mars in the sky, and to a fighting man it "seemed to call across the unthinkable void."

When he next regains awareness, he is on Mars, having been drawn there by some mystical process which could not be fathomed. He discovers that his earthly muscles give him tremendous strength and power pitted against the lighter gravitational pull of the Red World. He chances upon a Martian hatchery and encounters fifteen-foot-high green men with six limbs (four arms) mounted on eight-legged hairless creatures ten feet high at the shoulders, with ponderous broad flat tails and tremendous mouths "which split its head from its snout to its long, massive neck." As he later discovers, these creatures were thoats. The Martians carry forty-foot spears, but they have automatic weapons capable of firing two hundred miles.

Carter is saved by impressing the Martians with an exhibition of his

tremendous agility under the minimized gravitation, and is taken back to their city.

Despite a high degree of technical and biological knowledge, the Martians engage in continual warfare with rather primitive weapons. The warfare is necessary to keep the population in check, for the average Martian has a normal life span of almost one thousand years, is rarely downed by a serious disease, and the resources of the aging world are becoming less capable of supporting the population annually.

Burroughs' careful description of the culture of the green Martians is the portion that Metcalf wanted to condense to speed up action, but it is fascinatingly done in the manner of the best Utopias, and essential to the enjoyment of the story.

The green giants raise their children from eggs in incubators, eschew manifestations of sentiment and kindness, and teach them to glorify in battle. Telepathic communications can be picked up by John Carter, but his mind remains inscrutably closed to the Martians.

John Carter gains the loyalty of a gigantic, fastastically ugly, eight-foot "dog" as big as a Shetland pony that is appointed to guard him; wins the admiration of Tars Tarkas, a regional leader of the green men, and the respect of the otherwise cold-blooded community for his physical prowess. One day, when a perfectly Earthlike copper-colored woman, Dejah Thoris, a princess of the city of Helium on Mars, is captured, he has enough standing to protect her from harm. Their relationship develops into love.

There is a series of adventures which eventually result in the alliance of the red humanoid race of Helium with the green giants, and the overthrow of the country of the Zodogans, whose leader Dejah Thoris had promised to marry to save her kingdom.

After a brief period of happiness in which John Carter and Dejah Thoris are married, the destruction of the planet is threatened by the failure of the air-manufacturing plant. John Carter ventures to enter the almost impregnable structure before the air grows too thin to support life. He has gained entry, and his last memory is the sight of a Martian, who can sustain himself on less air than an Earth man, crawling toward the pumps. When he comes to, he is back in his body on earth, an outcast on his own world, imploring fate to send him back to the ancient globe, which contains everything that he loves and that is meaningful to him.

Those who have gained a stereotyped concept of Burroughs as a writer who conveys his plot line on a nonstop Jetstream of action, moving his characters along so swiftly that readers cannot react to his (laws, are in great error.

The fascination of Burroughs rests in the careful delineation of the *setting* in which he has placed his characters and the sharpness with which he etches them, presenting their weaknesses as well as strengths, their eccentricities, philosophies, and environmental shapings. A character may be villainous in motivation, but nevertheless strikingly courageous. A hero may do a foolish or unbecoming deed through pride or vanity. Political expediency may turn enemies into allies and then into firm friends.

*Under the Moons of Mars*, unlike *Tarzan of the Apes*, is not a satiric and at times damning criticism of "civilized" man, but instead a brief for the family ties, post-Victorian social customs, and standards of morality of Burroughs' day. He shows what distortions can result from a more efficient and scientifically run social order. It was almost an anticipation of certain socialist and fascistic governments.

There would be times in later years when he would be accused of borderline racism in his handling of African savages, but the message of *Under the Moons of Mars* that the outward form of a creature, no matter how bizarre, is not the measure of his value appears to anticipate and negate most such criticisms.

The readers of *Under the Moons of Mars* were getting marvelous escape into a never-never-land where no present-day elements could intrude. With no more training than the good fortune of being born with Earthly muscles, they were able to defeat alien giants and gain great respect and high position among a very civilized people. There was a noble and high-minded princess for the men to fall in love with and marry. Yet, all these elements of escapism, which Burroughs claims were at least in part derived from his own imaginings while tossing and turning from insomnia during financially taut years, are accomplished without stretching the moral standards of the people who indulge in them.

Perhaps most important, Edgar Rice Burroughs was a natural-born storyteller who lured the reader into the story and carried him effortlessly along as skillfully as almost any writer in English literature.

The response to his brand of literary entertainment evidenced itself swiftly when THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE installed a reader's department with the August, 1912, issue, titled "All-Story Table-Talk." In the September department the editor revealed that Norman Bean was actually the pen name for Edgar Rice Burroughs. He confessed his own dereliction in corrupting the name from Normal to Norman, but said that, in the future, stories would appear under the author's actual name. The readers were also told that "You know what a good story 'Under the Moons of Mars' was and how Mr. Burroughs' imagination got loose

and did whatever it wanted to—well the same thing has happened again. . . ."

The reference was to *Tarzan of the Apes*, which he was announcing for the October, 1912, issue. "It's a crackerjack," the editor said. ". . . If you will stop and realize how many thousands and thousands of stories an editor has to read, day in, day out, you will be impressed when we tell you that we read this yarn at one sitting and had the time of our young lives. It is the most exciting story we have seen in a blue moon, and about as original as they make 'em."

What the readers weren't told was that the magazine had come close to missing out on this landmark.

When Metcalf had asked Burroughs to try his hand at a historical story after accepting *Under the Moons of Mars*, he had been taken literally, and on November 29, 1911, received a complete novel, *The Outlaw of Torn*. Laid in thirteenth-century England, the story deals with the kidnapping of the infant royal prince of England from his mother, Eleanor, Queen of England, and his upbringing in an ancient French castle by a master swordsman who intends to use him as an instrument of vengeance. The boy, when grown, frustrates the British in his identity as Norman of Torn and finally gains the British throne as King Richard.

Metcalf did not like the novel and on December 21, 1911, returned it with comprehensive criticism.

Burroughs worked hard on revision and mailed it February 2, 1912, to Metcalf with two endings, one happy and the other unhappy. In a letter accompanying the manuscript, he asked that his real name be used and not Norman or Normal Bean.

What transpired was one of the major disappointments of Burroughs' writing career. Metcalf told him that he didn't care for the revision and doubted Burroughs' ability to rework the novel properly. He offered to buy the plot for one hundred dollars and turn it over to another author, who was an expert on medieval lore, for rewriting. Burroughs would receive a by-line.

In the same letter, he asked for a sequel to *Under the Moons of Mars*. In that story Burroughs had alluded several times to the fact that those Martians who attained the age of one thousand years voluntarily traveled to the valley of Dor, where, from the sea of Korus, flowed the river Iss, "which leads no living Martian knows whither and from whose bosom no Martian has ever returned, or would be allowed to live did he return after once embarking upon its cold, dark waters." Metcalf asked that Burroughs develop the mystical aspects of the valley of Dor, sea of Korus, and (he River Iss in a sequel, for he found those ideas fascinating.

Burroughs rejected Metcalf's offer to buy the plot of *The Outlaw of Torn* in a letter of March 6, but was open to developing a Mars sequel, possibly along the lines suggested.

As the letters of praise began to pour in following the publication of the early installments of *Under the Moons of Mars*, Metcalf quite understandably began to worry whether or not he was taking Burroughs too much for granted. The acclamation arriving by the daily mail indicated that a once-in-a-lifetime literary discovery had been made and special handling was in order.

This attitude was reflected in his letter of April 3, 1912, after not receiving anything from Burroughs for a month; he suggested that possibly he had interfered too much—after all, if he hadn't suggested a historical story, Burroughs would not have written *The Outlaw of Torn*—and wondered if there was anything new under way.

When Burroughs replied, briefly outlining *Tarzan of the Apes* in his letter of April 5, Metcalf responded anxiously, requesting to see it. When he received no further communication for almost seven weeks, Metcalf queried again on May 25.

He was relieved to learn that Burroughs had been involved managing the System Service Bureau, for the System Company, a firm devoted to specialty advertising and business methods, but hoped to complete *Tarzan of the Apes* in about a week.

The novel was mailed to Metcalf on June 11, 1912, and totaled eighty-three thousand words. Burroughs carefully specified that first serial rights only were being offered for sale; all other rights were withheld. He later received a letter from Robert H. Davis, dated January 27, 1913, confirming this fact for the American Press Association, which, on February 10, 1913, syndicated the Tarzan novel in a number of newspapers. The letter on rights was the first he ever received from Davis, who was the real power behind THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and the major fiction editor of all Munsey titles, including THE ARGOSY, MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, CAVALIER, and RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE.

He was mailed a check for seven hundred dollars for *Tarzan of the Apes* on June 26, which he received June 28 at 2008 Park Avenue, Chicago. On the date of receipt he wrote to Metcalf suggesting that his real name by-line the novel, with Norman Bean in brackets beneath it. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE for October, 1912, in which *Tarzan of the Apes* appeared, has become one of the landmark issues in the history of pulp magazines and one of the most sought after. Verified prices of one hundred dollars have been paid for the issue in complete sound condition, and the price is destined to go higher in the future, particularly since the novel has already become a permanent classic to place alongside



*Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, by Jules Verne.

The full-color cover by Clinton Pettee depicts Tarzan with his right arm encircling the throat of a great lion and his left hand uplifted with a dagger, ready to plunge it into the beast's side. A quiver of arrows is strung around his neck, and in the background a white man with a spear in his hand watches the dramatic contest in open-mouthed amazement. The cover carried the title *Tarzan of the Apes* and beneath it the subtitle "A Romance of the Jungle." The novel was printed complete in a single issue, occupying 132 of the 240 pages the readers received in those days for 15 cents, and this did not include another twenty pages of advertisements on coated stock. There was a single interior illustration, a silhouette of Tarzan swinging from a tree, which was unsigned.

"We believe that it goes without saying," the editors wrote in "All-Story Table-Talk," "that 'Tarzan of the Apes' is about as original a yarn as we've seen in a long while, and we shall be very much disappointed if we don't hear the same from some of our friendly readers."

There cannot be too many adults unfamiliar with the plot of *Tarzan of the Apes*, but for those few exceptions it is a recommended reading experience. A man and wife are stranded on a wild portion of the African coast by a mutinous crew. They build shelter and manage to survive. The woman saves her husband from death at the hands of a great ape, but the experience unsets her mind. That night a baby boy is born to her. She dies one year later, and in his grief her husband does not hear three great apes enter the cabin. He is killed, but his son is snatched up by a she ape who has recently lost her young one. She suckles the child, and it grows to manhood among the apes, becoming supernaturally strong with an animal's acute sensory development. As time goes by the young Tarzan finds the cabin and teaches himself to read and write from the primers therein.

Gradually he rises to supremacy over the ape tribe, and the African natives come to fear his strength and ingenuity.

Another group of whites is put ashore by a mutinous crew, this time including a girl named Jane Porter. Among them is Cecil Clayton, an heir to the Greystoke fortune and a relative of Tarzan's. The group is saved by Tarzan from a series of near disasters, including Jane's capture by a Great Ape and rescue by Tarzan, which builds the foundation for love between them.

Back in England, Jane decides to marry Cecil Clayton, feeling that her attraction to Tarzan is an irrational primeval desire. She tells Tarzan, who also loves her, why she has made her decision. Within moments a telegram is received by Tarzan confirming that he is the son of Lord Greystoke

and entitled to the estate. This will leave Cecil Clayton and his wife-to-be, Jane Porter, without any substantive means. Tarzan keeps the news to himself, and when Clayton asks him how he ever got into the jungle, the story ends with a renunciation of both love and fortune:

"I was born there," replies Tarzan, quietly. "My mother was an ape, and of course she couldn't tell me much about it. I never knew who my father was."

From the instant the story was distributed, the letters came like a torrent. The readers were both delighted and furious. Thrilled by the freshness of the plot and caliber of storytelling, they were outraged that the magnificent, noble Tarzan had come out on the short end of the situation. They pleaded, demanded, and threatened dire consequences if a sequel was not written to rectify the unsatisfactory situation.

Within days after the issue reached the newsstand, both Metcalf and his boss, Robert H. Davis, realized they had an incredible success on their hands. Davis had discovered dozens of famed authors before and would develop and discover scores more, but none had aroused reader interest of such enthusiastic proportions as Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Before the issue was off the stands, Metcalf wrote Burroughs on September 18 begging for a sequel. A reply from Burroughs September 20 expressed doubts as to his ability to write a good follow up, but told Metcalf that a sequel to *Under the Moons of Mars*, plotted to develop the implications of the valley of Dor, the sea of Korus, and the river Iss, was almost finished.

The manuscript, *The Gods of Mars*, was mailed from Chicago October 2 and accepted October 11. On October 12 Metcalf mailed Burroughs scores of laudatory letters. On October 16 a check for seven hundred and fifty dollars was sent for the eighty-five thousand-word manuscript, with the understanding that it, too, would be published under Burroughs' name. This was followed on October 21 by still more laudatory letters.

Edgar Rice Burroughs expressed dissatisfaction with the size of the check on October 30, stating that he felt he deserved more. He asked that *more* letters commenting upon his work be forwarded. On November 19 Metcalf agreed to up the word rate on the next manuscript and to keep the letters flowing.

There was another compelling reason why THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE desperately needed Edgar Rice Burroughs at this particular moment in its history. All over America the price of periodicals was mounting. Frank A. Munsey, pioneer of the ten-cent popular magazine supported by advertising, and then pioneer again of the ten-cent all-fiction pulp, which was self-sustaining because of its low production costs, had used this as his major selling stance.

Now the situation reached the point where Munsey could no longer hold the line. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, with 192 pages of fiction for ten cents, was a tremendous bargain, but aside from a regular presentation of science fiction and fantasy, it was not demonstrably superior to its many competitors. Once the price went to fifteen cents, an increase of fifty percent, its survival would be dependent upon the quality of its content and the appeal of its story policy. A companion magazine, THE CAVALIER, in policy and appearance virtually identical with THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, hadn't been making it even at 192 pages for ten cents, and a radical experiment in weekly publication for it was being tried. There was no reason to believe that THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE without its advantage of low price could effectively buck the competition.

Except for the advent of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

The first fifteen-cent issue of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was July, 1912. In the preceding number, the publisher, Frank A. Munsey, on a blue four-page insert, had broken the news to the readers, offering as justification a quadrupling in authors' rates in the preceding twenty years, a great advance in paper and printing costs, the reluctance of the news dealers to promote the low-priced magazines, and reminding one and all that he and his magazines had been the avant-garde of popular-priced publications. He promised a much larger magazine, an increase from 192 to 240 pages, a more readable type face, and a book-length novel complete in each issue.

For the first fifteen-cent issue the novel would be *The Red Book of Mystery*, a superior murder mystery involving a young doctor in a Scottish village, by Robert Simpson. Between 1917 and 1920 Robert Simpson would select manuscripts for THE ARGOSY, in 1919 he would have the modest distinction of being chosen as one of America's top ninety novelists by critic Charles C. Baldwin, and he would become the editor of the praiseworthy MYSTERY MAGAZINE in 1926. Even if all this accomplishment had been telescoped in time to the year 1912, it could not have made him the salvation THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE needed to carry it successfully through its price change.

The biggest thing in their favor was that *Under the Moons of Mars* concluded with the July issue and carried over enough enthralled readers to give the revamped magazine a fair sampling.

The almost frantic buildup for the Tarzan novel in September, throwing it lock, stock, and barrel into the October number, underscored the urgency of their situation. They were buying time, issue by issue, month by month, until they could stabilize their readership. The entire structure of the magazine world was changing, that of the popular family magazines as well as of the pulps, and (heir place in the new order was still clouded.

## 2. SCIENCE FICTION IN "THE ARGOSY"

THE ARGOSY, Frank A. Munsey's initial magazine, had been an immensely successful all-fiction pulp, the *first* all-fiction pulp, and had prospered for nine years prior to the launching of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was not a calculated venture but a hasty reaction to competition. THE ARGOSY magazine had gone through many changes, but with the October, 1896, number Frank A. Munsey converted it from a second-rate general magazine of articles, fiction, and photos (the dimensions of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC) to an all-fiction magazine printed on a good grade of uncoated stock, dropping that for pulp paper in December. There were 192 pages for ten cents, printed straight across the page like a book, with the names of the authors at the end of the stories in italics. Frank A. Munsey asserted that the circulation doubled when he made the policy change, from forty thousand to eighty thousand in a single issue, then inexplicably leveled out for four years, after which sales soared upward. He gave net-profit figures year by year to verify this fact. By 1904 the magazine had passed the four-hundred-thousand mark and would reach a half-million in the year ahead. Profits for the year ended December, 1904, would be two hundred thirty-seven thousand dollars and would reach three hundred thousand by 1907.

Circulation may have been helped by combining two publications with THE ARGOSY during that period. PETERSON'S MAGAZINE was absorbed with the September, 1899, issue. The magazine had been running steadily since its January, 1842, issue, and was noted for a high literary tone in its nonfiction, which made it a strange bedfellow for THE ARGOSY. The other publication was JUNIOR MUNSEY, begun as QUAKER in 1897 and combined with THE ARGOSY with the April, 1902, number.

What part, if any, did science fiction play in the early success of THE ARGOSY? It is difficult to weigh this factor, through obviously it did not retard it, since with the inexplicable exception of the year 1900, science fiction made up a conspicuous portion of the editorial content.

Though the first science fiction carried by the one-hundred-percent pulp-paper magazine was a socially advanced *new* short story, *Citizen 504*, by Charles H. Palmer (December, 1896), cautioning against the dangers of a highly regimented society, a substantial percentage of *all* the stories during the first few years were reprints. Many were from THE DAILY CONTINENT, the short-lived newspaper published by Munsey from February 1 to June 7, 1891; others were from MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and a good number from GOLDEN ARGOSY and THE ARGOSY. Among the reprints were science-fiction novels of some merit. *A Month in the Moon*, by

Andre Laurie (Paschall Grousselt), a well-told story of gigantic magnets which pull the moon down to the surface of the Sahara Desert, appeared in eight monthly installments, February-September, 1897. Its original appearance in America was as *The Conquest of the Moon* in seventeen weekly installments in THE ARGOSY, November 16, 1889-March 8, 1890. Previous to that, it had been an outstanding seller in hardcovers in France and England. It was serialized in England's THE BOY'S OWN PAPER in thirty-six installments, January 19-September 21, 1889, as *A Marvelous Conquest: A Story of the Bayouda*.

Not as imaginative, but still one of the most thrilling serials to appear, was William Murray Graydon's *The River of Darkness* in THE ARGOSY, May-November, 1897, in which a group of explorers is carried hundreds of miles under Africa by the current of a submerged river to a subterranean lake inhabited by monstrous serpents of an unknown variety. The novel originally appeared in GOLDEN ARGOSY, July 19-October 18, 1890, as *Under Africa; or, The Strange Manuscript of the White Slave*. It was also reprinted as a paperback book by the U.S. Book Company. A sequel, *Over Africa, Captives of the Red City*, took the readers to the skies, like Jules Verne's *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, and was published in THE DAILY CONTINENT, February 1, 1891. William Murray Graydon was a most unusual writer. He was born in Harrisburg, Pa., lived in England, and, before his death April 5, 1946, wrote 269 Sexton Blake detective novels, spread over the period 1904 to 1930. His son, Robert Murray Graydon, in addition to many Sexton Blake stories of his own, wrote a series of science-fiction novels under the pen name of Murray Roberts for MODERN BOY (England) built around the exploits of a flying superman Captain Justice. He died in 1937. Another significant serial was *The Golden Deluge* (June-October, 1897), by Otto M. Moeller, which, from internal evidence appears almost certainly to be a translation from the German and tells in synoptic form of the invention of a method for manufacturing gold, of the breakdown of the monetary system, of a war that wipes out half of humanity, and of a new world currency based on land value. The story ends in 1923 with an element of Utopia emerging from the shambles.

It should be noted that during the four months of June, July, August, and September, 1897, the three science-fiction novels discussed—*A Month in the Moon*, *The River of Darkness*, and *The Gold Deluge*—ran concurrently. In addition to the serials, there were four other short stories and novelettes of science fiction that year.

There was no science fiction of any importance during 1898, but in 1899, THE ARGOSY more than made up for it, serializing *A Queen of Atlantis*, by Frank Aubrey (February-August), who had enjoyed an inter-

national best-seller in 1897 with *The Devil Tree of El Dorado*. A unifying character of both books is Monella, a two-thousand-year-old son of Manoa, the legendary city of the Spaniards upon which Edgar Allan Poe based his poem *El Dorado*. In *A Queen of Atlantis*, the remnants of the Atlantean civilization is discovered on an island in the Sargasso Sea. Vampires and elf people play a part in this book, though it nevertheless manages to remain science fiction. Chronologically, *A Queen of Atlantis* precedes *The Devil Tree of El Dorado*.

It is of parenthetical interest to note that Upton Sinclair's novel of the Italian Renaissance, *In the Net of the Visconti*, was serialized in 1899.

*Beyond the Great South Wall* (September-February) was another bell ringer for 1899 which attained hardcovers. A great barrier wall is found to seal the antarctic from the outside world. Swept by a storm through a passage to the other side, a group of explorers finds that ancient Mayans had migrated there and dinosaurs still live in that unknown land.

During these years THE ARGOSY used no pictures on the cover, but in that space, made crude printed appeals for readership. Occasionally they featured single story titles, and *Beyond the South Wall* received such treatment, as did a number of the major science-fiction novels, before and after.

The big novel for 1901, *At Land's End* (May-November), was an exciting story of the exploration of the arctic by airplane. Since there were no airplanes then, Jared L. Fuller's effort was bona-fide science fiction.

*The Land of the Central Sun* (July, 1902-January, 1903) told of a world inside the earth, heated by the molten core suspended in the center, as in Edgar Rice Burroughs' later *At the Earth's Core*, with opposing civilizations and fierce wars. The reprint of *The Lake of Gold* (December 1902-July, 1903), by British author George Griffith, whose sales of science-fiction novels would exceed those of H. G. Wells in hardcover, was the only appearance of that fabulously popular author in a magazine edited in the United States. It involves the discovery of a lake of pure gold, which find finances the building of airplanes, submarines, and battle ships which effect the conquest of Europe by the United States.

William Wallace Cook was a pen name for W. B. Lawson, who had first gained notice as a dime-novel writer of considerable competence, particularly for the Street & Smith publications. When dime-novel work became erratic, he submitted fiction to Matthew White, Jr., editor of THE ARGOSY since 1889. THE ARGOSY became the stabilizing influence on his finances, and among the many novels of his they published was *A Round Trip to the Year 2000* (July-November, 1903). Cook wrote smoothly, but with tongue in cheek. He was a satirist, and as his characters

move one hundred years forward into the year 2000, they deal with sociological extensions of their times, which makes this novel well worth serious study. The revolt of the mechanical robots (the Muglugs) precedes Karel Capek by seventeen years. Had Cook been a more literary writer, the term "robot" would never have become popular and an automatic working device might today be called a "muglug." Nine years later THE ARGOSY would run a sequel, *Castaways of the Year 2000* (October, 1912-January, 1913), which enjoyed considerable popularity and contained significant social criticism despite its lighthearted mood.

During the years 1903 to 1907 William Wallace Cook was undoubtedly the leading writer of science fiction for THE ARGOSY, contributing *Castaway at the Pole* (March, 1904), *The Blue Peter Troglydite* (August, 1904), *Adrift in the Unkown* (December, 1904-April, 1905), *Marooned in 1492* (August-December, 1905), and *The Eighth Wonder* (November, 1906-February, 1907). One thing Cook's stories had in common. Whether they dealt with a trip to the future, a journey to the past, space passage to the planet Mercury, a lost civilization at the poles, or a plan to stop the rotation of the earth, they were concerned with the betterment of society. Five of his science-fiction novels were later reprinted in paperback in the Adventure Library published by Street & Smith in the twenties. They are today badly dated, contain questionable science, were hastily conceived, but are still easy to read and imaginative enough to make understandable why, for a brief period, they were so popular.

There were two years when THE ARGOSY ran no science fiction except the conclusion of a serial begun the previous year. Those were 1898 and 1900. Such a notable omission may have been sheer coincidence, or it might have had some relationship to the appearance of H. G. Wells' great fantastic novels in the United States. *The War of the Worlds* was serialized in COSMOPOLITAN in May-December, 1897, and *The First Men in the Moon* in November, 1900-June, 1901; and both scored a veritable publishing sensation.

It was at the same time as the publication of *The War of the Worlds* in 1897 that THE ARGOSY ran three science-fiction serials simultaneously, and it was during the appearance of *The First Men in the Moon* that it resumed, after a year's lapse, a heavy schedule of science fiction which was maintained.

The probability is strong that science fiction became a regular diet in the pulps because H. G. Wells was scoring so great a success in the slicks. It was obvious that its subject matter aptly fitted the category of high adventure, even when it was but the cerebral adventure of scientific discovery and invention.

During the early part of the century, when THE ARGOSY was building in popularity so rapidly, it was unillustrated. It predominantly featured the works of new writers, former dime novelists, and second-raters. Subscriptions made up a minor part of its sales; most copies had to sell on the newsstand and were subject to the competition of scores of other publications. Yet, at its peak in 1907 it was one of the most successful and beloved magazines in the world.

During an age when radio and television were unknown, when moving pictures were jumpy short subjects at five-cent admission, it provided 192 pages, or 135,000 words, of entertainment for only ten cents. Printed on the cover of the July, 1902, issue (along with a poster-type announcement of the science-fiction thriller *Land of the Central Sun*) was the following: "192 pages—All stories—stories of rapid action and stirring adventure, stories with sweep and go to them. Stories without tiresome descriptions or baffling dialect."

Sometimes THE ARGOSY stories were so stripped of description (a dime-novel characteristic) that they verged on becoming a lengthy synopsis. Frequently the writing could best be described as amateurish (though a few authors ranked very high, including early fiction by O. Henry and James Branch Cabell), but *always* there was a *story*, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. There was no slice of life, no grim realism, no character studies, no stream of consciousness, no sermons in the form of stories or fictionalized propaganda or promotions. But there *was* an enveloping human interest, an extraordinary ingenuity of plot, far-reaching imagination, a romantic view of life, slapstick humor, limitless variety, and true escapism.

The magazine was male-oriented but had a high woman readership, running many forthright love stories in action settings or sentimentally heart-warming situations.

In the parlance of today's trade magazines, THE ARGOSY had found a "niche," substantially more adult than the dime novels and considerably less "precious" than the popular magazines like COSMOPOLITAN, MCCLURE'S, PEARSON'S, STRAND, or THE BLACK CAT. THE ARGOSY matched or topped them all in circulation and even eclipsed in readers the five-cent weekly, COLLIER'S. There would be periods from 1907 on when THE ARGOSY would claim the second-largest circulation in the world.

### 3. COMPETITION—"THE POPULAR MAGAZINE"

IN A NATION devoted to the free-enterprise system, such a comfortable situation could not be a monopoly for long. With the issue dated November, 1903, THE POPULAR MAGAZINE appeared on the news-



stands, published by Street & Smith, for many years one of the great dime-novel houses and recently entering the popular-magazine field, with AINSLEE'S. Street & Smith was aware that the era of the dime novel and boys' weeklies was drawing to a close. The demise was being slowed by color covers and more readable type, but was inevitable. Street & Smith was in the early stages of entering the general magazine field through both the launching of new periodicals and the conversion of famous dime-novel series into pulps. The purpose of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE was to establish a boys' magazine with such a note of respectability that it would win the approval of parents. Its strategy for accomplishing this was to stay away from the sensational action cover, which had been the forte of the boys' magazines, and publish something serene and respectable. Finally the still-life cover was struck upon.

In the first period there were colored photographs of wooded, grassy hillsides; a man's fox hunting equipment hung on the side of a barn; ears of corn with pumpkin, and the legend: "Harvest of Good Stories in this issue." This policy brought two unexpected reactions. First, an inordinately high percentage of purchasers developed to be adult males rather than boys or teen-agers, fooled by the respectability of the magazine's appearance, and secondly, EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, in the January, 1905, number, blasted them for "copying" their cover design.

Henry Harrison Lewis, veteran dime-novel editor, had been given the job of putting THE POPULAR MAGAZINE over because of his knowledge of the boys' market. One of his greatest claims to fame was hiring seventeen-year-old Upton Sinclair to write a series of dime novels featuring West Point hero Hal Maynard. These stories appeared in a publication called THE STARRY FLAG WEEKLY, which was launched in time for the Cuban War. Sinclair, in an interview, claimed to have written up to eight thousand words a day for Street & Smith dime novels for four years between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one, contributing to the "True Blue Library" and "The Columbia Library," among others.

Lewis was himself a prolific contributor to THE POPULAR MAGAZINE as well as later pulps. One of the most interesting things he did as editor was to rebut EVERYBODY'S on their claim that THE POPULAR MAGAZINE had picked up the idea for still-life covers from them. He devoted four pages to the matter in the February, 1904, issue of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, in which he presented cuts showing that EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE had copied not only the idea but also the subject matter of many of its covers from THE BOOKLOVER'S MAGAZINE. He rubbed salt in the wound by presenting a series of quotes and ideas borrowed by EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE from MUNSHY'S MAGAZINE. Of course, since F. J. Ridgway, president of EVILKODY'S MAGAZINE, had worked seven years for Frank

A. Munsey on sales before becoming a publisher in 1903, similarity of outlook and method was not unexpected.

Far more significant was the change of policy of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE with its February, 1904, number. It dropped all pretense of juvenility, beefed up the magazine from ninety-six to "194 pages of Adventure Fiction" for ten cents, and called it "The Biggest Magazine in the World," since it had two pages more than THE ARGOSY. In actual count, THE ARGOSY ran 135,000 words an issue, as compared to 126,000 words for THE POPULAR MAGAZINE (and had a more readable type face), because it sets its columns more than one inch deeper on every page. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, with its February, 1904, number, provided THE ARGOSY with the first direct competition it had ever had—a pulp identical in size, format, and basic policy, differing only in its full-color, pictorial covers. With that issue appeared the first science fiction, a short story, *At Jupiter's Call*, by R. H. Farnham. A scientist theorizes that the pull of the planet Jupiter will draw an aerolite toward it if that object is raised to a height of five thousand feet. He attaches a cable to the stone, which is in turn fastened to a railroad flatcar. A balloon carries the aerolite to the five-thousand-foot height, at which the attraction of Jupiter, drawing it westward, pulls the flatcar at seventeen miles a minute, resulting in a disastrous collision.

A column in the March, 1904, issue, "A Chat with Our Readers," appeared to cast the shroud over the use of tales of fantasy in the future. It read, "We greatly admire Poe, and we think his work worthy of a very prominent niche in the halls of fame, but we do not believe the Poesque class of literature is what our readers want. And we will say, further, that the gruesome, the grotesque, the repellent, the blood-creeping tragic, will not find a place in these columns. Life is far too short to be able to spare any part of it for the perusal of gloomy stories."

Apparently the editor of the magazine had not carefully read the contents of that very same issue, because it contained *After the Paper Went to Bed*, by M. J. Reynolds, which nerve-shatteringly delineates how a performing kitten triggers a nervous breakdown in an overworked reporter.

Among the other stories in the March issue was one by Charles Agnew MacLean, *Seven-Nine-Cipher*, a pathetically inept attempt involving a planned theft in a railroad yard. The majority of the stories in the early issues of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE were scarcely better. Though MacLean showed small promise as a writer, he was to become one of the most distinguished of editors, replacing Lewis during 1904 as the guiding light of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE.

Whoever wrote the policy statement against tales of the bizarre and supernatural, it could not have been MacLean. He came up with one of

the scoops of the publishing season when he secured first American publishing rights for H. Rider Haggard's sequel to *She*, titled *Ayesha*. Haggard had always intended to write a sequel, though as the years passed he doubted his ability to work himself into the same romantic mood that had assisted in creating the literary magic that made *She* a classic. A letter of his outlines the plot as early as 1898, and his working title was *Hes*, an alternate appellation for the Goddess Isis.

The British book publisher Ward, Lock & Company had paid one thousand pounds (about five thousand dollars) for rights to the book and issued a first printing of twenty-five thousand copies in 1905. THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE serialized it in England in its issues December, 1904-October, 1905. They ran fifty-two interior illustrations, making the issues collectors' items. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, which featured the novel in the numbers of January-August, 1905, had no interior illustrations, but for the first three installments still life was abandoned on the covers and three outstanding artists, Hamilton King, E. Hering, and F. X. Chamberlain, offered graphic, colorful scenes from the novel.

Editor MacLean offered substantial biographical and associational information with *Ayesha*, which was a real adventure thriller with its locale in the mountain fastness of Tibet. "She," who appeared to wither and age in the flame in the original book, has not died, but lives again with her passion for Leo, whom she regards as the reincarnation of her ancient love. "She," or "Ayesha," is an immortal woman of extraordinary powers who has the chemical wizardry to convert iron into gold and is prevented from flooding the world with this metal only through the protestations of Leo that it will cause havoc and grief. Ayesha has the ability to bring into her presence scenes that are occurring distances away, and can even transmit these "visions" to her guests. She has the capability to hypnotize and even to call down the lightning and storm of the heavens at her command. Her kiss brings death to Leo, and her true origin and meaning is lost in allegory.

If any single story "made" THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, it was *Ayesha*. Before it began, the magazine had little more than seventy thousand circulation. By its conclusion, it was well on its way to the quarter-million mark.

The transition of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE to a publication of broader interest was not confined to *Ayesha* alone. While that novel was still running, MacLean secured first American serialization of H. G. Wells' *The Crowning Victory* (February-July, 1905). Wellsians may indeed start in wonder at the title of a novel by that distinguished author that they had not previously heard of, but they need not, because the story had actually been published more than live years earlier as *Love and Mr.*

*Lewisham*. A pleasant love story of a youthful "assistant master" at Whitley Proprietary School in England, it lent a further literary tone to a pulp adventure magazine that also ran a poem by Theodore Dreiser, *Bondage*, in its January, 1905, issue.

Charles Agnew MacLean had become good friends with Dreiser, when that "moody giant" was doing articles for Street & Smith's *Ainslee's* and editing dime novels for them at fifteen dollars a week. MacLean also advanced the five hundred dollars to buy back the plates of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* from Doubleday. When Street & Smith was looking for an editor to manage its new magazine, SMITH'S, it was MacLean's endorsement that got Dreiser the job.

The magazine, which was launched April, 1905, would eventually have as a contributor of short stories an eccentric, puffy little man named Charles Hoy Fort, whose interest in bizarre and inexplicable phenomena meshed with that of Theodore Dreiser. They had both been cub reporters on New York newspapers and they became firm friends. Dreiser would eventually publish Fort's first book of fiction and in later years seriously intended to write the man's biography. In the interim he helped him polish his work and encouraged MacLean to publish him. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE ran four short stories by Charles Fort in June, August, September, and December, 1905, none fantasy or science fiction, and none particularly outstanding. Several others by Charles Fort would appear in THE ARGOSY during 1905 and 1906.

One of the most popular characters in popular magazine fiction 1897 to 1903 had been Captain Kettle, a cocky and imaginative sprite of a sea captain. That character made its author, Cutcliffe Hyne, one of the most solicited magazine fictioneers of his time. The presentation of a completely new series built around the character of Commander John Kelly McTurk, USN, was a circulation winner for THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, beginning with the September, 1905, number. To the staff of contributors were also added that outstanding spinner of tales of the sea, Morgan Robertson; the acclaimed mystery story writer, Richard Marsh; one of the most popular authors of historical adventure who ever lived, Rafael Sabatini; and such strong figures of the time as Louis Joseph Vance, Louis Tracy, and Francis Lynde, the latter especially noted for his fine railroad stories.

These strong authors and features were not rationed out, but ran side by side. Most of the twelve covers for 1905 were strong action scenes from lead stories. The advent of 1906 found the publication so strong in circulation that it could safely revert to family-type and still-life covers, offering an acceptable appearance for any drawing-room table.

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE made a dramatic move in ending the year

1906 with an increase in price to fifteen cents and an increase in pages to 224. It was counting on catching and holding the American middle class who would pay the fifty-percent increase. The estimate of appeal was correct. The magazine held its readership and climbed to three hundred thousand copies a month. Additionally, there were forty or more pages of advertising, printed on slick paper in the front and rear of the magazine. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE was indeed a threat to the leadership of THE ARGOSY.

No one was more acutely aware of this than Frank A. Munsey, THE ARGOSY'S publisher. He had watched THE POPULAR MAGAZINE from its first issue, and even before it hit its stride with the H. Rider Haggard serial, had come to an accurate conclusion. There was room for more than one fiction pulp in the field, possibly room for a number. To capitalize on it, he had the alternatives of either increasing the frequency of publication of THE ARGOSY or issuing another pulp magazine. If there was going to be competition, he might just as well compete with himself.

Rather than tamper with the successful formula of THE ARGOSY, he decided to issue a companion, one that would be a carbon copy in size, price, and story mix, and also published on a monthly basis. It would be called THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE.

#### 4. FRANK A. MUNSEY

FRANK ANDREW MUNSEY, at the time he placed the first issue of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE on sale, dated January, 1905, was already making one million dollars a year net, primarily from two publications, MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY; he would go on to publish other magazines, and at one time or another own eighteen different newspapers. The ruthlessness with which he killed or merged newspapers that didn't pay their way earned him the enmity of both the publishers and the reporters of the nation. He did not make friends easily, had little personal warmth, never married, devoted all his time to his business, and when he died from a burst appendix on December 22, 1925, was worth forty million dollars, the bulk of which he left to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which some contend he had never entered.

Born August 21, 1854, near the town of Mercer, Maine, his father, Andrew Chauncey, was a farmer-carpenter, and his mother, Mary Jane Hopkins, always felt she was a linear descendant of someone who came over on the Mayflower. A wealthy Munsey later set a genealogist on the track and not only verified *five* ancestors who came over on the *Mayflower* bill also located the most incredible (but factual) group of

generals, governors, and judges on both sides of the Atlantic that ever graced the family tree of any American.

His family skirted the thin edge of poverty, and Frank A. Munsey received no higher education. He said that as a boy he was a "visionary," speaking of his dreams of "a brighter and more beautiful world." As a youth he "had a knack for mechanical gadgetry," and as he grew older and more prosperous, "was a pioneer automobilist and one of the very early passengers in an airplane. He craved things modern and up-to-date." These two qualities, utopianism and a love for invention and novelty, go a long way toward explaining his toleration of an inordinate amount of science fiction in his publications, considering that they were aimed at a general audience. Though in later years it was said that he read little in his magazines, there is no question that he set policy. He hired no one to tell him what *kind* of magazine to publish, nor was he grateful for such suggestions. He would change the approach of his magazine either through careful deliberation or through whim. Often he made all the magazines alter simultaneously to comply with his desires.

If he decided his pulps should have interior illustrations, they *all* had interior illustrations and all started the new policy the closest possible month. If he decided it was time to raise the price to fifteen cents, *all* his publications went to fifteen cents, and if possible, the same month.

He loved his mother devotedly and did not leave his home town until she died in 1882. He had little respect or admiration for his father, who he theorized had never amounted to anything because marriage had trapped him with a wife and children. This is offered as a psychological explanation of why he never married, though his own explanation, that he was too occupied with business when young and too old when rich, appears more logical.

Nearby Augusta, Maine, was a publishing center of some importance. PEOPLE'S LITERARY COMPANION and VICERY'S FIRESIDE VISITOR, dollar-a-year publications with tremendous reception in the rural communities, were headquartered and printed there. They were intended primarily as advertising media, with a leavening of stories, religion, fashion, agriculture, and pictures. By today's standards they were pabulum, but hundreds of thousands of readers across the nation found pleasure in them.

Securing a job as manager of the Augusta telegraph office for Western Union, Munsey found the magazines among his most active customers and became fascinated by the publishing business.

He took a prospectus of a magazine to be called THE ARGOSY to businessmen in Augusta and received promises of loans that would bring

his working capital up to four thousand dollars, of which five hundred was his own savings. Most of the five hundred dollars was gone by the time he arrived in New York, having been spent on manuscripts. Then the Augusta businessmen reneged on their loans and left him to start the magazine with forty dollars.

He went to E. G. Rideout, another former Maine resident, now established in New York as a publisher with RIDEOUT'S MONTHLY, THE HOUSEHOLD GUEST, and THE HOUSEHOLD JOURNAL, and convinced him to publish the magazine. It appeared as GOLDEN ARGOSY, a boys' weekly, with the issue dated December 9, 1882. Munsey wrote, edited, sold ads, and did the clerical work on it himself, but in five months bankruptcy was the fate of E. G. Rideout. In exchange for uncollected back salary, Munsey was given the title of the magazine and continued publication with the issue of September 8, 1883.

For the next ten years he experienced a heartbreaking series of ups and downs, induced to some degree by continuous and imaginative promotion of his property.

The editor who was to become most identified with THE ARGOSY was Matthew White, Jr., and he would be involved in a variety of capacities until his retirement on June 2, 1928. White was the editor and chief contributor and may even have been the publisher of a monthly titled BOY'S WORLD, launched with the issue of December, 1885, and discontinued with the issue of May, 1887. He used to exchange advertisements with GOLDEN ARGOSY, and when his magazine collapsed, he gave the title and unexpired subscriptions to Munsey in exchange for an editorial job. An unfinished serial by White, *Camp Blunder*, was reprinted in its entirety and completed in GOLDEN ARGOSY.

In 1886, Munsey had offered a writing and editorial position to Richard H. Titherton, a teacher who had lived for several years at the same boardinghouse, at 237 West 49th Street, New York City, and who from 1884 on would come down and help him with clerical and editorial work at no fee. Titherton accepted the twenty dollars a week proffered and filled in wherever needed. He worked with John Kendrick Bangs for a while as an editorial writer on the short-lived Munsey tabloid, THE DAILY CONTINENT, and when MUNSEY'S WEEKLY, which had been started with the issue of February 2, 1889, was made a monthly with the issue of October, 1891, he was its editor.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE was the basis of the publisher's fortune. As a twenty-five-cent publication appealing to the gentry, it lost money. Noting the success of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE in England at the U.S. equivalent of ten cents in gaining mass circulation and letting the advertisers

provide the margin of profit, Munsey made the same move with the issue of October, 1893, and thereby changed the entire direction of American magazine publishing.

Munsey was aiming at an emerging middle class, with a high percentage of high-school graduates. He gave them a magazine in every way equal if not superior to the twenty-five-cent publications in quality, illustration, and size, tapping an open market where no competition existed. Today the same thing is happening as the quantity of college graduates is forcing a readjustment of magazine standards to appeal to the new mass market.

Munsey had been watching the attempts of two other magazines to hit this popular market. MCCLURE'S, with a price of fifteen cents, started with the issue of June, 1893, and COSMOPOLITAN, which cut its price from twenty-five cents to 12Vi cents with the July, 1893, issue, were moving in this direction. In short order they had to come in line with Munsey, but he was on his way to seven hundred thousand circulation, millions in profits, and a signal career as a publishing tycoon.

## 5. ROBERT H. DAVIS AND "THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE"

JUST AS the drop in price of MCCLURE'S and COSMOPOLITAN indicated • that Munsey would have no exclusivity in the low-priced field for the middle class, the appearance and closely parallel editorial content of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE meant that the days of THE ARGOSY without competition were over. In contemplating his own companion, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, Munsey was confronted with the problem of an editor. His two most seasoned men, Matthew White, Jr., and Richard Titherton, were guiding THE ARGOSY and MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE respectively, and it would be foolhardy to endanger those two huge successes by burdening their editors with still more work. The logical man was Robert Hobart Davis, fiction editor of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, who had come to work for him in 1904.

Considering the short time he had been with the company, Davis had dramatically improved the quality of fiction in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and seemed to have a rare instinct for talent. His outstanding achievement had been to get O. Henry to agree to give him first look at everything he wrote. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE editorship was to prove the spearhead of a career that was to gain for him a reputation as one of the greatest American fiction editors of all time, respected and, because of his great heart and human warmth, loved throughout the magazine and newspaper industry.

Robert H. Davis was a Midwesterner, son of the Reverend George



Ransome Davis and Silvia Nichols Davis, born March 23, 1869, in Brownsville, Nebraska. His father and mother had come west to do missionary work among the Indians, and they were a particularly devoted and loving couple. He and his brothers, Sam and Bill, grew up in rugged fashion on the plains.

Sam was the newspaperman in the family and published the DAILY APPEAL out of Carson City, Nevada. Bob, when fifteen, went to work for him delivering newspapers on the back of a partially broken mustang. He left Carson City for San Francisco at nineteen, a skilled compositor, and got a position on the CHRONICLE. He became a reporter when the notes on a baseball game that he was setting were blown from the window, and having seen the game, he wrote it from memory so vividly that he was promoted.

At one time or another he worked on every San Francisco paper, and became a life-long fight fan after covering the James Corbett-Joe Choynski fight classic held aboard a barge. He briefly published a magazine called CHICK, then set out for New York in 1896 for a brighter future.

Working in conjunction with an artist, he became a feature writer for New York newspapers, including THE NEW YORK WORLD, Hearst's THE NEW YORK JOURNAL, and Pulitzer's THE MORNING WORLD. His biggest scoop was his expose of the Beef Trust, shipping inedible meat to soldiers fighting in the Spanish-American War.

Frank A. Munsey was looking for an editor for his NEW YORK SUNDAY NEWS, and it was important that the prospect be feature-oriented. Charles M. Palmer, who knew Davis from San Francisco, suggested him as editor.

Bob Davis went in to see Munsey on a Saturday and requested double the salary he was getting on THE NEW YORK MORNING WORLD to shift over. When Munsey was reluctant, Davis gave him until Monday to think it over.

Leaving the office, he met a friend, Frank Seaman, coming from the Lotos Club, who invited him to a private dinner given by Daniel Sully, cotton broker and father-in-law of Douglas Fairbanks. When Davis arrived, he found Frank A. Munsey was also a guest and was seated at his left. Tim Woodruff, governor, a man he had known for several years, was at his right.

Homer Davenport made a speech on life in the West, and Bob Davis rose and gave an impromptu talk of his own of incidents on the disappearing frontier. On being seated, Jim Woodruff suggested to Munsey that he get to know Davis better.

The reply of Munsey has become part of his legend: "I'll may interest

you to know, my dear governor, that Mr. Davis enters my employ at ten A.M. Monday."

In recounting the incident, Davis added: "And for twenty-two agreeable, prosperous, and satisfactory years, I remained in his employ. . . . I had an understanding I was never to be bothered. . . . I got along with him." Once when asked how he could stand working for a man like Munsey, Davis replied: "Where else can I get twenty thousand dollars a year?"

One of the friends Davis hated to leave behind when he left THE MORNING WORLD was John Barrymore, later to become a famous actor, but who was then political cartoonist for the paper and on at least one occasion included Davis in one of his sketches.

Describing Bob Davis as he appeared at the age of seventy, Fred S. Mathias found him short, hunched, and heavy, with keen, searching eyes and a lined face. He displayed initial belligerence upon introduction, then his face would soften into a kindly composure. He had a pleasant voice, but it carried command. His office was lined with photos of famous people he had taken himself, including D. H. Lawrence, Jo Davidson, Jean Sibelius, and Irvin S. Cobb. During his lifetime he was regarded as probably America's greatest amateur photographer. As an editorial director he was a benevolent dictator.

Shortly after Davis took over editorship of THE NEW YORK SUNDAY NEWS, Frank A. Munsey killed it, as he had papers before and would many papers afterward. He then shifted Davis to MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE as fiction editor. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was Davis' first chance to prove what he could do with a magazine whose destinies he controlled. To assist him, Davis employed Thomas Newell Metcalf, a reporter he had worked with on THE NEW YORK WORLD.

The cover of the initial issue, in addition to the title, carried only a red shield on a blue background bearing the words "Something New." Beneath it was the information "First Number," the price, "10 cents," and "192 pages." A replica of the cover and the contents appeared in the January, 1905, THE ARGOSY, promoting the new venture.

The first issue carried two stories that could be construed as science fiction. The lead serial (five were started simultaneously) by W. Bert Foster, veteran from the old juvenile THE ARGOSY, *When Time Slipped a Cog* (January-May, 1905), had a clever situation where a man abruptly discovers that in a moment of faintness, while seated in his office, a year has vanished from his life, a year in which he has grown wealthy, married, and made scores of business deals of which he knows nothing. His attempts to reconcile events made for a good story.

In the same issue there was another of those sociological fantasies lor

which the Munsey Magazines had such a predilection, THE GREAT SLEEP TANKS, by Margaret Prescott Montague. The essence of sleep is extracted from the atmosphere by an inventor and sold in jars. He becomes powerful enough to challenge the government, and is deposed when the great sleep tanks are scuttled, sending the insomniac populace into one prolonged slumber.

A clever little story by Howard R. Garis, who would a few years later write the Tom Swift series and then received acclaim with the creation of Uncle Wiggily, told how a grounded electric cable turned a man-hole cover into a magnet, which kept setting off a police box; the story was appropriately titled *The Ghost at Box 13*. Garis would go on to write a number of short, humorous science-fiction tales for THE ARGOSY.

The most significant change came with the February, 1905, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, which had a pictorial cover showing two cowboys whooping it up. Munsey had been a leader in many things, but this time he was going to follow. The artist Hamilton King, who had introduced *Ayesha* on the cover of the January, 1905, THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, painted the April, 1905, cover of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, showing two stylish women proceeding along a street on a windy day. The issues that followed introduced Valentine Sandberg, W. E. Wood, E. B. Mead, and Howard Giles with a series of pastel-shaded depictions in the most superb taste, of lovely girls in maidenly settings, sailing vessels at sea, exotic scenes from the Near East, a stagecoach in motion, and homespun scenes from life. The following March, 1906, F. X. Chamberlain, who had done the third (March, 1905) cover for *Ayesha* for THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, made the first of many appearances.

Of all the cover artists, Valentine Sandberg had the most pleasing technique, somewhat like an etching in pastel shades, at the same time capturing the spirit of the period completely. The Sandberg cover most pleasing to the science-fiction readers must have been that of April, 1906, showing a one-man dirigible with an airplane propeller to the fore, soaring over the Flatiron Building, in which the magazine's editorial offices were quartered. The covers of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE depicted no scenes from stories during this period. Within a year the publication carried thirty-five pages of advertising an issue and claimed to be printing two hundred fifty thousand copies for distribution.

Color covers were not to be confined to THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE alone; the October, 1905, issue of THE ARGOSY sported the first pictorial cover since its conversion to a pulp. It portrayed an Indian, with gun in hand, gliding down a river in a canoe, with an orange moon suspended in the sky. The covers that followed attempted to symbolize Hie action to be found in THE ARGOSY, and in this respect they were far

truer to the actual content of the publication than were the covers of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. On the other hand, they were also far inferior in artistic execution and generally had only two colors instead of three or four.

The thirty-five pages or so of advertising carried by THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE were not all that they seemed. For years Frank A. Munsey had established himself at an advertising rate of one dollar per page per one thousand readers. He cut this rate in half in offering combination prices on advertising in both THE ARGOSY and THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, nearly seven hundred thousand circulation for three hundred dollars, or less than fifty cents per page per one thousand readers. This meant that THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, which did not sell over two hundred thousand copies per month, received a maximum of one hundred per page when the advertising revenue was prorated according to the circulation of each publication.

The special effectiveness of Bob Davis as a cultivator of literary talent displayed itself as early as the April, 1905, issue, in which a first story by a new writer, Mary Roberts Rinehart, was plotted around a love triangle titled *A Gasoline Road Agent*. Other short stories followed, and as the man who encouraged her the most, Davis was privileged to receive and publish the mystery novel that established her fame, *The Circular Staircase* (November, 1907-March, 1908). Bob Davis had a way with women. He encouraged and published the first stories of Fannie Hurst and Faith Baldwin. He bought the first story of E. J. Rath (Edith R. Branerd) and gave her the plot of her second story, *Nervous Wreck*, which appeared as a book, a play, and a moving picture starring Otto Kruger.

The interest THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE took in publishing science fiction was evidenced by their reprinting of *The Moon Metal*, by Garrett P. Serviss, complete in the May, 1905, issue. Originally published as a book by Harper's in 1900, it enjoyed a good sale and was syndicated in a number of newspapers. The story deals with the discovery of an unlimited supply of gold in the antarctic, which destroys its market value, and a scientist comes up with a new metal, artemesium, which replaces gold as the foundation for international currency. It is determined that the new metal is taken from the moon by a matter-transmission device, and other scientists eventually learn the method, so that artemesium, too, loses all value. Its emotional content is handled so well that this short novel has remained fresh and effective across a span of many years and has become a fixed classic in the field of science fiction.

Still another competitor entered the all-fiction pulp field in the form of

THE MONTHLY STORY MAGAZINE, dated May, 1905. This magazine would become, with the May, 1907, issue, THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE and its policy was similar to that of THE ARGOSY, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, and THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. If anything, it was a bit closer to the two Munsey pulps in its regular use of science fiction than was THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. It introduced to the field of science fiction George Allan England, destined to become a major figure. That inaugural story was *The Time Deflector*, in the September, 1905, issue, telling of a man who discovers a method of reading the past through a telescope from the light that left the earth previously and has been reflected from other worlds in space. The idea had been used a year earlier in the book *Around a Distant Star*, by Jean Delaire, in England, but it may have been its earliest appearance in the United States.

The following year Street & Smith decided to issue a companion to THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, titled PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE, with the issue of July, 1906. It was a direct competitive adventure entry, with 192 pages for ten cents and a misleading family-style cover. Its policy was much like that of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, though its use of science fiction was, if anything, even less frequent, though it did not categorically bar it. The November, 1906, issue carried *The Poison That Leaves No Trace*, by Howard Fielding, aptly termed "a fantastic tale of chemistry." It had a few brief articles and an editor's and reader's department, "Let's Talk It Over." In 1908 it jumped the price to fifteen cents and ran a four-color frontispiece suitable for framing and thirty-two pages of actual scenes from current stage plays, plus 192 pages of fiction. It ran no serials. The frontispiece and stage photos were dropped, and it went to 224 pages of fiction with illustrations. It carried the Jimmy Dale stories of Frank L. Packard from 1912 on, and was a pulp of formidable quality.

## 6. THE SCRAP BOOK—STRANGEST OF ALL MAGAZINES

TYPICALLY, IN THE face of growing pulp-magazine competition, instead of marshaling his substantial resources and imagination in combating it, Munsey took off in a new direction. He conceived of a periodical to be titled THE SCRAP BOOK. "Everything that appeals to the human brain and human heart will come within the compass of THE SCRAP BOOK—fiction, which is the backbone of a periodical circulation; biography, review, philosophy, science, art, poetry, wit, humor, pathos, satire, the weird, the mystical—everything that can be classified and everything that cannot be classified. A paragraph, a little bit, a saying, an editorial, a joke, a maxim, an epigram all these will be comprised

in the monthly budget of *THE SCRAP BOOK*," Munsey told his readers.

The first issue of the magazine was dated March, 1906. Robert H. Davis had responsibility for it, but managing editor was the author Perley Poore Sheehan. "The Newest Thing That Ever Happened," the cover blazoned. "This magazine contains more human interest matter than has ever been crowded between the covers of a single magazine." The magazine sold for ten cents, and the first issue gave 192 pages of printed matter, unillustrated, on pulp paper. The publication was precisely the wild potpourri that Munsey had promised. There were 134 different items in the first issue, under such headings as "The Latest Viewpoints of Men Worth While," "Beginnings of Stage Careers," "Biography," and "Poetry," with special features including "Roosevelt and the Labor Unions," "Our Trade Triumphs in 1905," "What the Prophets Say about 1906," "Dress for All Occasions," "The Progress of Women," and "Winter Photography for Amateurs," along with numerous jokes, anecdotes, fillers, and all the diffuse literary paraphernalia usually found in scrapbooks.

Munsey printed five hundred thousand copies of the first issue and claimed that they sold out. Some credence was given to his claim when the second issue appeared printed on an excellent grade of book paper, which even after sixty-four years shows little signs of aging. The June, 1906, issue of *THE ARGOSY* carried a house ad signed by Robert H. Davis offering cash for old scrapbooks: "Collections of poetry, humor, interesting statistical data, strange happenings, animal stories, curiosities in literature, biographical, etc., especially desired." Evidently the magazine intended to make up a substantial part of its contents from actual scrapbooks.

An apparently happy state of affairs and sales continued until the June, 1907, issue, when Frank A. Munsey was hit by one of the most bizarre publishing brainstorm of all time. "The new idea, in a word," he wrote, "is the publishing of a magazine in two sections—two complete magazines, each with its own cover, and yet each bearing the same name, and being a part of the whole. The two magazines are to be sold as one, precisely as in the case of the Sunday newspaper with its varying sections."

Munsey referred pointedly to the tremendous competition now building in the all-fiction pulp field that had been all his own for a while. He said that economic pressures were forcing costs of magazines upward and that the ten-cent price, which had created the mass audience, could not survive much longer.

The July, 1907, issue of *THE SCRAP BOOK* appeared in two sections. The first section was 180 pages on coated stock with at least as many

illustrations and halftones as pages. The entire content was nonfiction and poetry, and there was a fascinating variety of features. The second section was all fiction, printed 192 pages on book paper, with a colored pictorial cover. The stories were both new and reprints.

The one problem was that the customer had to buy both sections for twenty-five cents, and a quarter of a dollar was a lot of money in 1907. While it had seemed to be a good idea to have a magazine that two people could read simultaneously, it also turned out that many readers were not interested in one or the other of the sections and wouldn't invest twenty-five cents just to get the section they wanted. The result was a circulation disaster; sales fell off in great gobs of forty thousand and fifty thousand an issue. The Great Experiment had failed! The cover of the September, 1908, nonfiction First Section stated: "Beginning with the October number, THE SCRAP BOOK will be printed in colors and issued in one part only—The price will be ten cents a copy."

In creating the two-part magazine, Munsey had editorialized that the day of the specialized magazine was fast arriving and that people were tired of purchasing an entire periodical just to get one or two things that interested them. He was quite evidently sincere in that appraisal, for on September 15, 1906, he distributed the October issue of THE RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, a 192-page ten-cent pulp, just as heavy on the fiction as on the fact, copiously illustrated, and aimed directly at a relatively narrow audience. Despite a quantity of factual material, the appearance of this magazine was a landmark event, for it was the first truly specialized pulp magazine, a forerunner of the detective, western, love-story, air, and science-fiction pulps to come.

That was followed by an even more remarkable experiment, THE OCEAN, whose first issue was dated March, 1907. It was a magazine of sea stories with some nonfiction, printed on pulp paper, 192 pages for ten cents. It would run eleven issues through to January, 1908, and seven of those issues would carry science fiction. The first issue led off with a four-part novel, *Sea Gold*, by George Bronson-Howard, a popular contributor to adventure magazines, with a story of a man who discovers how to make gold and the efforts of the "Trust Trust" to gain exclusivity of the secret. The August issue ran a short, *The Passing of the Waters*, by Edwin C. Dickinson, in which the United States Navy is sunk by a superior enemy fleet which then goes steaming through the Panama Canal. An engineer blows up a key dam, releasing the waters from the artificial lakes, leaving the enemy's ships stranded in the mud. The most interesting story it printed was the two-part serial *In the Land of Tomorrow*, by Epos Winthrop Sargent, of an island, some hundreds of miles off New Zealand, where those scientists are welcomed whose out-

standing inventions have been refused by the world. Marriage is not permitted, for the children from the union of men and women scientists frequently prove physically defective. On Century Island there is weather control, electricity from radioactivity, electric cooking, and thermostatically controlled baths. While the plot is old, focusing about two lovers building an airplane to escape the island, the story is a superior piece of work for its period, particularly in its effective writing.

The audience of THE OCEAN proved too limited, so it was discontinued with the January, 1908, number and resumed as THE LIVE WIRE with the February issue. THE LIVE WIRE was a fabulous pulp. Like all the others, 192 pages for ten cents, it undoubtedly was the first pulp magazine and maybe the only one to run *all* illustrations, one hundred fifty or more of them in each issue, *in two colors*. Frank A. Munsey had bought some new two-color presses and was using THE LIVE WIRE as an experimental publication, and it was a joy to thumb through page after page of articles, stories, poems, and cartoons, all illustrated profusely, all well drawn, and all with a second color. The contents were very similar to those of the early issues of THE SCRAP BOOK.

The eight issues of THE LIVE WIRE contained a number of tales of science fiction. *The Great Scourge of the World*, by H. A. and G. A. Thompson (May, 1908), told of the attempts by a scientist to specifically destroy the poverty-stricken and miserable of the world with a direct-contact gas spray that produced the effects of the Black Plague, but whose effects were non-contagious. *The Great Baseball Brainstorm of 2002* (June, 1908), by B. Bulger, is one of the earlier if not the earliest sports story of the far future. *The Burning Image*, by Crittendon Marriott, which began in the July, 1908, number, was a six-part novel which begins as a cloak-and-dagger murder mystery and ends in a confrontation with a fantastic Mayan god. Marriott was an important early mystery-story writer who occasionally dabbled in science fiction.

THE SCRAP BOOK had been a split personality, and its conversion back to a single monthly magazine was equally schizophrenic. The title of the fiction section was changed to THE CAVALIER, which began life with the October, 1908, issue. Five uncompleted serials from THE SCRAP BOOK were resumed by THE CAVALIER, which at first ran on book paper, 192 pages for ten cents. The boost in a carryover in readers who are hung up on five serials was its initial sales impetus.

The nonfiction section of THE SCRAP BOOK incorporated THE LIVE WIRE with its October, 1908, issue, carrying on that magazine's uncompleted serials. The tasteful covers were back, the fiction was back, and so were the scores of odds and ends that had previously been an integral part of the magazine. Additionally, *all* the illustrations in Tin; SCRAP



BOOK now appeared in two and three colors, which showed up dramatically on the book-paper stock used.

THE SCRAP BOOK had used a limited amount of science fiction and supernatural tales previously, including reprints of Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Washington Irving, E. Bulwer-Lytton, Daniel Defoe, and an excerpt of *Frankenstein's Monster* (February, 1907) from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's famous novel. The most interesting of the new stories were *The Human Brick*, by Mark C. Francis (October, 1907), where the ashes of a cremated man are made into a brick and he retains consciousness after becoming part of an apartment house; *When Science Warred*, by Julian Johnson (November, 1907), in which an old French scientist permits plague germs to enter a gale heading toward Germany, to forestall an invasion by that nation; *The Avatar*, by Harvey J. O'Higgins, which finds a student with a head injury suffering lapses in which he writes manuscripts in Monk Latin; and *The Thing Behind the Curtain*, by Charles Stephens (May-July, 1908), relating the invention of a machine for transmitting and receiving thought waves with an intensity so effective it can temporarily activate cadavers.

The year 1909 saw THE SCRAP BOOK place greater emphasis on science fiction, with several important authors making novel-length contributions. Editor Sheehan had paid Garrett P. Serviss four hundred dollars for his sixty-five thousand word novel of an air-buccaneer operation in the year 1936 titled *The Sky Pirate*. Compared to *The Columbus of Space*, which was still running in THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, *The Sky Pirate* (April-September, 1909) showed a paucity of imagination, with a girl kidnapped by air, and running battles between planes not capable of doing over one hundred forty miles per hour. The actual writing was smooth, and the story was easy to read, though it would never be reprinted.

Serviss' serial was followed by George Allan England's first long science-fiction tale, *The House of Transformation* (September-November, 1909), dealing with the use of extensive and advanced surgery to turn a gorilla into a man.

With the July, 1909, issue, THE SCRAP BOOK had dropped its family-type cover and gone back to straight title and the blazoning of the feature story, with at best a tiny line cut. During 1910, in size and advertising it gave the outward appearance of prosperity and success, but by 1911, it switched back to pulp paper and not only dropped interior illustrations in color but also dropped all art. Though the quality of the stories and articles remained good, there was less variety. Outstanding during this last year of its regular publication was *Monsieur De Guise*, (January, 1911), by (lie magazine's editor, Perley Poore Sheehan, a mas-

terfully poignant ghost story of a great Southern mansion on an island in a cedar swamp, and an old man who sits in luxurious splendid isolation and recalls the spirit of his dead wife to sing for a guest a sweet love song in French. George Allan England's *The Man with the Glass Heart* (May, 1911) was a brilliant anticipation of today's surgical experiments, written with considerable skill.

## 7. THE ADVENT OF "THE CAVALIER"

THE CAVALIER started from Volume 1, Number 1 in its October, 1908, issue, even though it carried THE SCRAP BOOK'S serials. Editorship had been turned over to Robert H. Davis. The first few issues continued the fine book paper, but it was changed to pulp in 1909. The tastefully handsome covers, patterned after THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, were carried into 1910. The stories were unillustrated.

No time was lost in presenting science fiction, *World Wreckers*, by Frank Lillie Pollock, appearing in the November, 1908, issue. A short novel of a scientist who invents a method of manufacturing gold and is kidnapped by a group who work to use the metal to take over the world, it is easy to read. The preoccupation of writers of the turn of the century in dealing with the possibility of the conversion of baser metals to gold is so intensive that a fourth-year thesis by a sociology major on the theme might prove illuminating.

Following the lead of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE almost four years earlier, THE CAVALIER secured first American rights to a novel by H. Rider Haggard. THE CAVALIER badly needed a circulation winner. It was a good magazine, but by 1910 there were a lot of good magazines, and more being added.

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE had gone twice a month for a three-month experimental period with its October, 1909, issue. It was the same as adding another potent competitor. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE was edging close to four hundred thousand monthly circulation. It was the biggest pulp magazine on the stands, with 224 pages, and if the readers could be trained to buy two issues a month there were bound to be tens of thousands who had bought a second or third magazine who would drop it for the additional issue of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. These implications boded no good for the supremacy of THE ARGOSY, which had reached a peak of over five hundred thousand copies monthly in 1907 and had begun to decline under the press of competition. The big selling point that THE ARGOSY had was its five to seven serials. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE as a semimonthly would negate that factor. It had long been

publishing a complete 50,000-to-70,000-word novel every issue. Now its readers would have to wait only half the usual time between installments of its serials.

Since June, 1890, a monthly magazine, *SHORT STORIES*, had engaged a select clientele, translating stories from other languages and reprinting old classics. It had always published many new stories, but in recent years was greatly increasing the ratio. Doubleday purchased the magazine in 1910 and converted it into a 160-page pulp in direct competition to the other adventure magazines in the field. *SHORT STORIES* had never printed a great deal of science fiction, but it did run some. It reprinted *The Purple Pileus*, by H. G. Wells, in its issue of March, 1908, telling of a harried, henpecked man who eats a fungus which changes his entire character and life. October of the same year saw a new story, *The Gyroscope*, by Percival Landon, of a mammoth gyroscope that goes awry and creates havoc. Its editor, Harry Peyton Steger, was regarded by Bob Davis as one of the magazine field's finest. He died in 1912 and his seat was taken by Harry Maul, who converted the publication into a man's adventure magazine.

Against existing and new competition, *THE CAVALIER* was having great difficulty getting its circulation above seventy-five thousand. The question was, could H. Rider Haggard do for it what he had done for *THE POPULAR MAGAZINE*?

When purchasing *Ayesha* for publication in 1905, *THE POPULAR MAGAZINE* had implied that they had to outbid several other publications to get it. *THE CAVALIER'S* price for the ninety thousand-word *Morning Star*, which they ran as an eight-part serial (November, 1909-June, 1910), seems quite moderate. It was purchased from Haggard's London agent, A. P. Watt & Son, on September 15, 1909, for eight hundred dollars, or less than one cent per word. *THE CAVALIER* bought first American serial rights only, United Kingdom serial rights going to *THE CHRISTIAN WORLD NEWS OF THE WEEK*, who published it in twenty-one installments, October 21, 1909-March 10, 1910.

*THE CAVALIER* rushed the novel into print almost instantly, probably because the American hardcover edition from Longmans, Green & Co., New York, was scheduled for May 27, 1910. Undoubtedly, for this reason, there was no lead time for fanfare, no special covers or promotions. The novel was included as would be any other novel. During the period of its appearance it was the policy of *THE CAVALIER* not to run story titles on the cover.

*Morning Star*, as a favorite of Haggard fans, is an excellent story of action and intrigue set against the background of ancient Egypt. A princess of Egypt, raised by Asti, a woman with magical powers, does

not want to marry the Pharaoh. The Egyptians believed that everyone had a spiritual double, which they called a Ka, which could take that person's form but was capable of living without a body. The Ka of the Egyptian princess marries the Pharaoh for her and does him in. In the process, the princess is rescued from the Nile by a ship rowed by ghosts, and they are aided by the wondrous harp of Kepher, god of the desert people. It sounds like an unlikely grab bag, but it is told well.

There was virtually no effect upon the magazine's circulation as a result of the Haggard novel. The story had not been "merchandised."

An unusual fact about a short science-fiction novel that appeared in the January, 1910, issue of THE CAVALIER has never been called to the attention of the reading public. That novel, *The Wizard of the Peak*, by Thomas E. Grant, of Estes Park, Colorado, was almost a paragraph-by-paragraph, character-by-character paraphrase of Garrett P. Serviss' *The Moon Metal*. *The Wizard of the Peak* is built around the situation of the world running out of coal and all industry collapsing as a result, to be temporarily saved by a mad scientist who can extract power from the air. He holds the world in his thrall until his secret is duplicated, then disappears, to be seen again and again in the vicinity of his power plants in different parts of the world. The last scene is a confrontation with the young scientist who upended him; the madman literally fades away into the air; there follows a great explosion of one of his plants, resulting in his image being permanently engraved on the side of the mountain.

Since THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE had reprinted *The Moon Metal* as recently as 1905, it is strange that it wasn't spotted by the editors, though it undoubtedly was later called to their attention by the readers. At that time there were no readers' departments, so no record of the reaction was made in print. It was the only story by Grant published by a Munsey magazine, and they paid him 175 dollars for it.

Throughout 1910 and most of 1911, THE CAVALIER indulged itself in a series of "humorous" science fiction about impractical inventors whose ideas backfire. Edgar Franklin was present with his Hawkins stories, possibly the longest series ever to run in science fiction. They were popular at first, and then after scores of episodes, hooted and reviled by Munsey readers. Burke Jenkins wrote a series of his own for THE CAVALIER, about Mr. Wimple, who invents a "woundless rifle," a fog piercer, a wonder plant that grows instant mangoes, and a method for slowing down the frantic pace of "modern" 1910 life. There were numerous humorous "solos" by others, but with acute circulation trouble, the magazine needed something calculated to bring in more customers than these slapstick shorts were capable of attracting.

All of Munsey's magazines were experiencing serious declines in cir-

culation. THE ARGOSY had dropped below four hundred thousand copies and would eventually fall to three hundred thousand. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, from a peak of three hundred thousand, was down to close to two hundred thousand and would drop another twenty-five thousand. THE CAVALIER had never seen one hundred thousand and through most of its life would never go much over seventy-five thousand. Even the big-time slick, MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE itself, from a height of seven hundred thousand was down close to four hundred thousand.

In June, 1911, Munsey ordered the "class" covers taken off THE CAVALIER and colorful pulp action substituted in their place. The stories were all to be illustrated inside the magazine, with the title lettering drawn by the artists. The next month, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY received the same treatment, both on covers and inside illustrations.

The interiors were particularly graphic and greatly enhanced the magazines. With the changed covers, the loud, familiar style of art that would become the trademark of the pulps for the next forty years emerged full-blown.

THE CAVALIER, which had the lowest circulation (even below that of specialized THE RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE), was given the standard Munsey remedy (or was it actually the Bob Davis cure?), consisting of lavishly stepping up the quantity and quality of science fiction in its pages.

The most promising science-fiction writer on the American scene was the journalist-astronomer Garrett Putnam Serviss. Born at Sharon Springs, New York, March 24, 1851. Serviss' first love was astronomy, and he spent four years at Cornell majoring in science, graduating in 1872. Another two years at law was taken at Columbia College Law School, which he left in June, 1884, and he was admitted to the bar the same month.

His heart was in journalism, for he went to work as a reporter on THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE. Then he shifted to THE NEW YORK SUN, where he spent ten years as night editor. He worked for Charles Dana, who liked his articles on astronomy, featuring them on the editorial page. Talks he delivered on astronomy proved so popular that he resigned from THE NEW YORK SUN and made a living at lecturing and free-lance writing.

To capitalize on the sensation created by the serialization of H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* in COSMOPOLITAN in 1897, which was syndicated by two newspapers in the United States, Serviss accepted a commission to write a sequel. The result was *Edison's Conquest of Mars*, which ran early in 1898 in those same newspapers that had published

*The War of the Worlds*. Hastily written, but impressively imaginative, Serviss' effort had Thomas Alva Edison gather the great minds of the world about him, build a space ship armed with a disintegrator ray, and journey to Mars to inflict upon its evil denizens a defeat which resulted in the destruction of their ancient civilization.

Though the bulk of his work was in popular science features, he went on to write and syndicate *The Moon Metal*, which enjoyed a good sale in book form and was reprinted in THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. Following this with *The Columbus of Space*, he became an important figure in science fiction. THE SCRAP BOOK, having published *The Sky Pirates*, was receptive to anything new he had to offer. He sent them a novel which was to prove his masterpiece, *The Second Deluge*. He was mailed on April 14, 1911, a check for seven hundred and fifty dollars in payment for the novel, approximately seventy-five thousand words long. His residence was then 8 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York.

Though purchased by THE SCRAP BOOK, *The Second Deluge* never appeared in that magazine. Readers of THE SCRAP BOOK during 1910 and 1911, finding 120 or more pages of advertising per issue, understandably might have concluded that here was one of the most successful of magazines. They were not aware that *all* the advertisements sold to MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE were repeated *free of charge* in THE SCRAP BOOK. In part this was to offset the sliding circulation of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, and in part it was to make THE SCRAP BOOK look like a tremendously thick bargain for ten cents, and thereby help to sustain it.

The SCRAP BOOK was scheduled to be combined with THE CAVALIER beginning with the issue of January, 1912. The new title would be THE CAVALIER AND THE SCRAP BOOK, with nothing but the fiction being carried over. The original concept of THE SCRAP BOOK would be discarded.

The cover of the July, 1911, issue of THE CAVALIER illustrated *The Second Deluge*, and the novel was unquestionably the greatest single tale of science fiction published by the Munsey magazines up to that time, and the finest story on the theme of Noah and the Ark in a modern tense. The story involves the discovery by a scientist, Cosmo Versal, that within a year the earth will pass through a small nebula composed of water and that the condensation will leave a residual layer of liquid six miles deep around the earth. He builds a gigantic ark, in which he duplicates Noah's feat of accommodating males and females of all manner of creatures on the face of the globe.

The deluge arrives as predicted, and the ark sets sail. The description of the world catastrophe is superb, and the handling of the interplay of human personalities is a totally unexpected "plus" for so early a period in science fiction. Added to that was the fecundity of intriguing situa-

tions the author was able to derive from the central catastrophe. Serviss' chief inspirator was Jules Verne. He had dedicated his book *The Columbus of Space* to that pioneer science-fiction writer, and in *The Second Deluge* the ark meets with a French submarine appropriately named the *Jules Verne*.

*The Second Deluge* went into hardcovers, selling for \$1.50 from McBride, Nast & Company, March, 1912. It contained four illustrations by George Varian drawn especially for the book. It would later be reprinted by AMAZING STORIES in three installments (August-October, 1926); AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY (Winter, 1933); and FANTASTIC NOVELS (July, 1948). Each reprinting would contain a new set of illustrations by Frank R. Paul, Leo Morey, and Lawrence (professional name of Lawrence Sterne Stevens), respectively. Typical reactions from readers on the 1948 reprinting were: "A truly great story," "Man, oh, man. What a treat!" and "Couldn't have been better."

The same issue of THE CAVALIER contained a short science-fiction novel by George Allan England, *The Ribbon of Fate*, a well-written effort in which a plot by the assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy to permit the Japanese to enter Pearl Harbor and take over Hawaii is uncovered and foiled.

England had been turning out science fiction intermittently since 1905, and much of it was good. He was a developing writer, growing in imagination and ability with each story. The August, 1911, issue of THE CAVALIER published the first installment of a four-part novel by him titled *The Elixer of Hate*, which made it instantly apparent that he ranked with Serviss as one of the two modern leaders of American science fiction. The novel is a variant of the Elixer of Life theme. An old man near death, Dr. Granville Dennison, learns that a scientist living on the Mediterranean island of Cete has discovered a chemical that will prolong life. Dr. Dennison takes a draft of the potion, against the protests of its discoverer, Pagani. Within days he begins to grow younger and agrees to remain with Pagani so that observations can be made of his progress. As the years disappear, he falls in love with the scientist's niece, and then discovers to his horror that he has stepped into the quicksands of youthwardness and is rapidly becoming a boy again. Discovering that the scientist had killed eighteen people for earlier experimental work and blind with hatred because of his ironic fate, Dennison pretends to have reverted to a child's mentality. He practices archery with a boy's toy, kills Pagani with the arrow, and then commits suicide.

The strong influences of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rapacinni's Daughter" can be found in the description of the garden and the characterization. The powerful evidence of H. G. Wells' method is present here, as it is

in much of England's science fiction. There are crudities, but there are also passages of great beauty and feeling. There is the strong possibility that F. Scott Fitzgerald received inspiration from England's novel for his short masterpiece, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," which was collected in his first book of short stories, *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920). In Fitzgerald's story, a man is born old, almost seventy, and gradually grows younger. He marries, but continues to become even more youthful, eventually ending as a baby in a crib.

Fitzgerald as a boy was inordinately fond of Horatio Alger and G. A. Henty, and these would inevitably lead him to the adventure pulp magazines as he grew older. His favorite writer was H. G. Wells, which would have inclined him strongly toward fantasy and science fiction.

Some sort of a high point in the career of THE CAVALIER in its emphasis on science fiction was certainly reached with its November, 1911, issue, when renowned cover artist Modest Stein illustrated a scene from a new four-part novel by the author of the Hawkins series, Edgar Franklin, titled *The Person of the Pyramids*. An ancient Egyptian mummy revived by Ludwig Schlumpf, Ph.D., develops to be a one-time king, and he finds it difficult to adjust to a world where his authority means little. There is a broad note of humor and a faint touch of satire which seem to make the story an expansion of Edgar Allan Poe's "Some Words with a Mummy." Its appearance made a total of three out of four serials in THE CAVALIER science fiction that issue, the other two being installments of the Serviss and England stories.

THE CAVALIER, in absorbing THE SCRAP BOOK with its issue of January, 1912, became the first weekly pulp magazine in history. Faced with two unprofitable publications, THE SCRAP BOOK and THE CAVALIER, Frank A. Munsey had superimposed a change upon them. He would see if there was room for a *weekly* in a field as rapidly expanding as the pulp adventure magazines.

He was too wise to test the possibility with THE ARGOSY or THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, both of which were making money, particularly after the debacle he had created with the initially successful THE SCRAP BOOK. It was important that the experiment be made, for THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, with its twice-a-month schedule, was cutting deep into his magazines' sales because of the small amount of waiting time between serial installments. When THE CAVALIER had run Haggard's *Morning Star*, readers had to wait eight months to get it all. Had it appeared in THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, it would have been four months, but in a weekly it would be two months or less. No one objected to so short a wait for serials.

Another factor that induced the change in Munsey's mind was the



advent of still another pulp action magazine, ADVENTURE, issued by the Ridgway Company, publishers of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE. They had the money to finance a good magazine, and Erman Jesse Ridgway, having worked for Frank A. Munsey, knew a great deal about the ingredients that went into an adventure magazine. The first issue of ADVENTURE was dated November, 1910, and was edited by Duncan Norton-Taylor. It ran 192 pages, but sold for fifteen cents, five cents more than Munsey's pulps. Part of the extra revenue went back into payments for authors, and from it's earliest issues ADVENTURE used old Munsey favorites like George Allan England, William Wallace Cook, William Tillinghast Eldridge, and Frank Condon. Additionally, they had such developing talent as Talbot Mundy, Theodore Goodrich Roberts, Damon Runyon, and William Hope Hodgson. They printed little fantasy or science fiction, and what they did print was peripheral, borderline material.

Pulp magazines could now be termed a "field."

## 8. GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND AND "THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE"

THE CONVERSION to weekly of THE CAVALIER AND THE SCRAP BOOK was also marked by a cheapening of the covers, reproductions being reduced to two colors. The spearhead story to engage the public was a new George Allan England novel that was destined to make history, *Darkness and Dawn*. Like many other of the fictional milestones that appeared in Munsey magazines, its writing and appearance were no accident. Robert H. Davis had helped England in the plotting. The story had been prepared well in advance, payment of five hundred dollars for fifty thousand words having been sent to England August 23, 1911.

The plot of this story has become a standard. A secretary, Beatrice Kendrick, and her boss, a young engineer named Allan Stern, awake at some indeterminate future date in the ruins of an office high up in New York's Metropolitan Tower.

Only the steel skeletons of a few skyscrapers still remain in a deserted city. Full-size trees now grow between the buildings. It is estimated the two have remained in a state of suspended animation for fifteen hundred years. The attempts of the new Adam and Eve to build a life for themselves and their encounters with a murderous race of blue-black distorted, misshapen creatures that may have conceivably descended from man provide danger and drama. Finally they leave the cadaverous wastes of Manhattan to try their fortunes across the river.

The novel had all the elements of the most popular science fiction: a

great catastrophe, a strange locale, love interest, undreamed-of dangers, fast action, and high escape.

Readers of 1912 never forgot the story. A. J. Liebling, of THE NEW YORKER, more than fifty years later was haunted by the memory of England's story, which he had read serialized daily in THE NEW YORK EVENING MAIL, beginning with the edition of March 4, 1912, not much more than a month after it concluded in the January 20, 1912, issue of THE CAVALIER AND THE SCRAP BOOK. It had been retitled *The Last New Yorkers*, "A Weird Story of Love and Adventure Amid the Ruins of a Fallen Metropolis," and may possibly have even been syndicated in other papers.

Under the title of *That Was New York*, "To Him She Clung," Liebling told of looking up the old newspaper in the New York Library and reminisced about his feelings then and his adult interpretation now of that story at a length of twenty-six columns for the October 12, 1963, THE NEW YORKER. Sadly, for all his great allusion to scholarly research, he had not the slightest notion that *The Last New Yorkers* had first appeared in THE CAVALIER AND THE SCRAP BOOK as *Darkness and Dawn*, that together with two later sequels it had been published in hard-covers by Small, Maynard and Company in 1914 and seen at least three printings, or that it was reprinted complete in FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, August, 1940. (After Liebling's death, it appeared in hard-covers again from Thomas Bourgey and Company in 1965.) He was not even aware that there were probably fifty thousand people familiar with *Darkness and Dawn* and that there had been a dozen articles about it and thousands of references to it through the years. He was convinced he had resurrected a piece of worthwhile nostalgia that no one but him remembered.

The appearance of *Darkness and Dawn*, by George Allan England, and *Under the Moons of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, in THE CAVALIER AND THE SCRAP BOOK and THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE only a month apart ushered in a new era to science fiction, the era of the pulp scientific romance. These stories also made the Munsey pulps the major publishers and most important focus of science fiction in the world. While H. G. Wells was still turning out his scientific romances, the "better" magazines ran other stories like them. Wells had set a vogue, and when he stopped writing science fiction and decided to become a novelist, the vogue declined.

At just about the year 1912, the impact of the advertising agencies began to force changes on the popular magazines that acted further to reduce their publication of science fiction. Earlier, COSMOPOLITAN,

EVERYBODY'S, THE METROPOLITAN, HAMPTON'S MAGAZINE, and even THE RED BOOK had been "family" magazines with reading matter for everyone. Advertisers, discovering that women controlled the purse strings, allocated the lion's share of the budgets to publications that slanted toward the fair sex.

Magazines which had been the dimensions of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC increased their size to make a more effective showcase for advertising. THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, COLLIER'S, LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, and WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION had always used the oversized page. Now, one by one, COSMOPOLITAN, HAMPTON'S, EVERYBODY'S, RED BOOK, THE METROPOLITAN, PEOPLE'S and others bowed to the trend. At the same time, they became more woman-oriented, and science fiction by social happenstance became segregated in the pulps.

Usage and times frequently change the true meaning of words. The stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs and George Allan England about Mars and the future were termed in retrospect "scientific romances," though at various periods they would also be termed "different" stories and "pseudoscientific" stories. The origin of the phrase "scientific romance" is not known. It was around for a long time before Edgar Rice Burroughs and George Allan England began writing. C. A. Hinton, M.A., used *Scientific Romances* as the title for a series of scientific evaluations which he began to have published in 1888 on such topics as "What Is the Fourth Dimension," "A Plane World," "A Picture of Our Universe," "Many Dimensions," and various others.

Gustavus W. Pope, M.D., in his two-volume series, "Romance of the Planets," termed the first, *Journey to Mars* (G. W. Dillingham, 1894), a deliberate attempt at a "scientific romance," and it contains and anticipates most of the elements in Edgar Rice Burroughs' Mars stories, including a red princess, sword battles, various colored races, extreme longevity, wizards, an officer from earth who is imbued with supernormal powers because of the effect of the atmosphere, flying reptiles which can be saddled to carry a man, and various other similarities.

The science-fiction works of H. G. Wells have traditionally been called "scientific romances," so the question may reasonably be asked: "Is there a difference between the meaning of the term 'scientific romance' after 1912 that was not inherent before 1912?"

The answer is yes.

Webster's Comprehensive Encyclopedic Dictionary (Columbia Educational Books, 1942) defines the word "romance" as meaning: "Originally a tale in verse written in one of the Romance dialects; hence any popular epic or any fictitious and wonderful tale in prose or verse; a kind

of novel dealing with extraordinary and often extravagant adventures, or picturing an almost purely imaginary state or society; tendency of mind towards the wonderful and mysterious. . . ."

That certainly would cover almost any work of science fiction, but somewhere in the last decade of the nineteenth century the emphasis on the word began to change. "Romance" and "love" became interchangeable. Previously "romance" was a gaudy synonym for "adventure." It became a precise synonym for "love," and so it remains today, regardless of dictionary definitions.

When Bernarr McFadden issued TRUE-STORY MAGAZINE, the first issue, dated May, 1919, had the headline, "We offer \$1000.00 for your Life Romance." No reader misunderstood what he meant. He did not mean one's life adventure. He meant one's love story. When several years later he issued a companion magazine titled TRUE ROMANCES, he did not mean true "adventures," nor did a single reader misinterpret his meaning. Clayton Publications released RANCH ROMANCES in the twenties, and they meant ranch *love* stories, not ranch "adventures."

The term "scientific romance" when applied to novels like *Under the Moons of Mars* or *Darkness and Dawn* meant science-fiction love stories. The love or romantic element is an integral part of the story, but the boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl formula is forwarded on a Jetstream of adventure and action, against immensely colorful backgrounds like the dry ocean beds of Mars or the unknown world of the future.

The novels of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells in the scientific vein have always had a preponderantly male audience. Since most science fiction is in the tradition of those two great writers, this fact is generally true for the entire literary history of science fiction. One great exception was Edgar Rice Burroughs, whose novels always enjoyed a substantial female following.

Jules Verne placed his stress on technical plausibility, travel, and action. There was little of a romantic interest in his stories. Garrett P. Serviss was in the Jules Verne tradition. His finest work, *The Second Deluge*, contains virtually no love interest, and where it appears in his other stories it assumes a minor place. Gustavus W. Pope, M.D., in *Journey to Mars*, added not only the romantic element but also more imaginative situations to what he admired in Verne. He therefore becomes much more a predecessor of Edgar Rice Burroughs than does Garrett P. Serviss, who immediately preceded him.

Some of H. G. Wells' stories anticipated the scientific romance that the Munsey magazines were to popularize, most notably *The Time Machine*. The debt George Allan England's *Darkness and Dawn* owes to

it is obvious. In England's story there is a locale set in the future. We find a degenerate race of cannibalistic subhumans, as were the Morlocks in *The Time Machine*. There is the beginning of a love story in *The Time Machine*, but it is not fully developed. The love story in *Darkness and Dawn* is the story. As has been stated, it is Adam and Eve cast out of the Garden of Eden all over again.

What Edgar Rice Burroughs had to offer in *Under the Moons of Mars* was a degree of originality in his approach, and an imagination so inventive of alien objects, backgrounds, and philosophies that it transcended even works of such able writers as Serviss and England. They strove for verisimilitude, he strove for escape. As a storyteller he may very well have been a genius. Acknowledging everything that he might have picked up from others in the course of his prior reading, he nevertheless was an original. He *created* a school of science-fiction writing. Both Serviss and England *followed* another school of writing, though the latter, in *Darkness and Dawn* and the two sequels to follow, was ably making a transition to the scientific romance.

This is not to say that the scientific romance of the Burroughs school was a better type of science fiction. It was a *different* type that appealed to a much wider audience at the time of its appearance and therefore broadened the base of interest in the science fiction derived from Verne and Wells. It was story for the sake of the story and did not intend to educate or to preach.

The discovery of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the transition of George Allan England into a writer of enthralling fantastic romances occurred just when THE CAVALIER, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, and THE ARGOSY were in trouble. Infusions of science fiction must always have been circulation boosters, otherwise they would not have been so common in Munsey magazines, and Robert Davis would not have spent time working on way-out plots with able authors.

Like manna from heaven, Burroughs had arrived just when the order had been given to price THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY at fifteen cents. To show that he didn't do anything by halves, Munsey even made "The Flagship of the Fleet," MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, fifteen cents at the same time. To add more responsibilities to what Bob Davis already had, he was also given the editorship of THE ARGOSY with the orders to drop all serials and run a complete novel each issue.

*Darkness and Dawn* had given the new weekly the impetus it needed to survive the conversion. Few regulars were going to discard the magazine in the midst of so thrilling an adventure. It had also carried over unfinished novels by E. Phillips Oppenheim, Edgar Franklin, and Simeon Robertson from Tin; SCRAP BOOK, so it held some of their audience. It

added the mystery-story writer Louis Joseph Vance to the lineup with the issue of January 6; Albert Dorrington, another popular mystery writer from THE SCRAP BOOK on January 13; Albert Payson Terhune, destined to one day become the world's most popular writer of dog stories, on January 20; and a short story by the highly promising woman discovery, Faith Baldwin, with the issue of January 27. The cumbersome name THE CAVALIER AND THE SCRAP BOOK was shortened to THE CAVALIER with the issue of February 3, which also led off with a seven-part posthumous novel by Philip Verrill Mighels, *A Shipwrecked Venus*, a love-story adventure of castaways on an island threatened by headhunters.

THE ARGOSY had started a first-rate readers' section titled "The Argosy's Log-Book" in the February, 1911, issue. It was undoubtedly inspired by a long editorial section that had run in THE POPULAR MAGAZINE since almost its first issue, but its combination of editorials and readers' comments made it from its inception far superior, and it became so popular that it was featured on the cover. Bob Davis decided to inaugurate one in THE CAVALIER. At first it took the form of a two-page section titled "Announcements for Next Week" (February 3). Then it was changed to "Heart to Heart Talks with Our Readers" (March 2) and was lengthened to four pages.

The vogue of "psychological" detective stories in the form of Edwin Balmer's and William B. McHarg's Luther Trant series in HAMPTON'S MAGAZINE and Arthur B. Reeve's tremendously popular Craig Kennedy stories in COSMOPOLITAN and THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, had led to a spate of out-of-the-usual-run detective characters. The February 17 issue of THE CAVALIER introduced *The Occult Detector*, the first of a long series of stories that would run in the Munsey pulps for the next twenty years. Written by a Salt Lake City doctor, J. U. Giesy, and a Cincinnati lawyer, Junius B. Smith, their detective, Semi Dual, utilized astrology, chiromancy, handwriting analysis, psychic phenomena, crystal-ball gazing, and other questionable sciences to solve his criminal cases.

Pictorial covers disappeared, to be replaced by poster lettering beginning on March 16, and the legend "Issued Weekly" appeared under the magazine's logo, which had been redesigned to eliminate the capital C and make the entire title small capitals.

A banished Egyptian prince, who, with his followers, ends up in Arizona in 2000 B.C. and builds a civilization there, accumulating great treasure, which is guarded by his descendants, was the plot background of *Red O'Rourke's Riches*, by Katherine Eggleston and Frank H. Richardson, an eight-part novel which ran March 2 to April 20. The idea was good, but it was crudely handled.

A far more remarkable effort was *The Ape at the Helm* (April 6-27),

by Patrick Gallagher, which was hailed by Bob Davis as "a combination of Edgar Allan Poe, Clark Russell, and Robert Louis Stevenson." The story deals with a ship that loses its first mate and finds the captain taking aboard a half-man, half-ape from an island, who nobly and efficiently fills the position, despite attempts to kill it. The author, an ex-sailor, portrays effectively the aloneness of this noble man-animal, despite the need of the humans for his services.

Three-color covers, bleeding out over the edges, returned with the opening installment of *The White Waterfall* (April 13-May 4), by James Francis Dwyer. Though borderline in its fantasy aspect, this novel involving the Wizards of the Centipede, a degenerate, centuries-old cult, it is superbly written and easily one of the best adventure stories THE CAVALIER was to publish.

Eventually Bob Davis admitted that the letters of praise regarding *Darkness and Dawn* were piling up so massively that a sequel had been ordered and was now being written. In the interim, George Allan England had submitted a novel titled *The Golden Blight*, of which Davis said: "Nothing like it has been written during this generation. Not only will it become sought for in each issue of THE CAVALIER, but is bound to become one of the best-sellers. Destiny has planned this kind of a reception. . . ."

*The Golden Blight* was George Allan England's turn to deal with the incredible obsession writers had with gold during this period in American history. A scientist discovers a means of turning the world's gold into gray ash. Economic chaos reigns as he proceeds with this task. A Jewish financier from Europe buys up the gray ash with silver, anticipating that it will eventually revert to its original form. He assembles it all in one place, with the other tycoons gathered about him, and as it turns back into gold, he screams with religious fervor that now the Jew has turned the tables on the Gentiles and will deal out justice for all the centuries of oppression. The chemical action of the gray ash converting back into gold turns it molten, and a great flow of tons of gold pours over the entire group of money men, destroying them all. Now that all international financiers are destroyed, the world becomes a near-Utopia, with socialism predominant.

England was a rabid socialist, and this book was one of the most extreme presentations any magazine ever permitted in print. If his understanding of socialism was no more reliable than his understanding of the relationship of gold to the world's monetary system, he was at best pathetic as a proselytizer for his cause.

The book was published in hardcovers by the H. K. Fly Company in 1916, with live rather poor illustrations by C. D. Williams. Bob Davis

found himself a "fellow traveler" on the dedication page, listed with Socialist-party stalwarts for his role in conceiving this novel. A paper-bound edition also appeared.

THE CAVALIER readership's appetite for stories detailing the making or finding of gold seemed insatiable. In *The Gold Deluge* (September 21, 1912), by Gerald Villiers Stuart, a young man who has discovered a method of making gold is luxuriously imprisoned by leading financiers and then subjected to brain treatment to cause him to forget his formula, lest he disrupt the economy of the world.

Four installments were not too many to relate the every trial and tribulation of Tom Talbot, who has invented a magnet which is attracted to gold in *The Gold Finder* (October 19-November 9, 1912), by Annesly Kenealy.

THE CAVALIER made a number of attempts to engage reader interest above and beyond the entertainment value of the stories and the rapport established by the "Heart to Heart Talks with Our Readers" department. Crittenden Marriott, a popular mystery-story author and occasional science-fiction writer, had submitted a novelette concerning the discovery of an automobile fuel called Motorine, prepared in the form of small cubes. The disappearance of its inventor, mysterious explosions in the laboratory, and strange men involved inexplicably in the events prompted Bob Davis to publish the story, *The Vanishing Cubes, without its ending* in the issue of April 6, 1912, and offer one hundred dollars in cash prizes to the readers who came closest to the correct solution of the problem. The actual ending, revealing that the cubes were explosive when wired and that the inventor was being kept a prisoner by men trying to get the secret, was published along with the names of the prizewinners in the May 25 number. The author selected as the winner was E. G. Orbert, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, who received first prize of fifty dollars and was uncannily accurate in his anticipation of the solution.

Frank A. Munsey may have inspired a highly unusual literary experiment that appeared in the August 10 issue. A brief tale of the future, *In 2112*, by J. U. Giesy and Junius B. Smith (authors of the Semi Dual detective series), appeared, and immediately after it was a translation into Esperanto by Elmer E. Haynes, M.D. An introductory blurb advised interested readers that they could procure more information about the "international language" by writing the Esperanto Association of North America, Washington, D.C.

Munsey's genealogist was Dr. D. O. S. Lowell, who had been one of his teachers at Lisbon Falls, Maine. Dr. Lowell had been a contributor to the first twenty issues of GOLDEN ARGOSY with a series titled



"Argosy Yarns," collected into book form as *Jason's Quest* by Leach, Shewell and Sanborn, Boston, in 1893. Having elevated himself to headmaster of Roxbury Latin School, Dr. Lowell now became a militant proselytizer of Esperanto. The language had been invented by Dr. L. L. Zamenhof, a Warsaw physician, in 1878, when he was just nineteen years old. The purpose was to create a language containing words that had no irregularities, exceptions, or duplications of meaning and thus would be comprehensible to everyone. Dr. Zamenhof's results were first published in 1887, and usage began in France.

Two articles by Dr. D. O. S. Lowell appeared in THE SCRAP BOOK for May and June, 1907, titled *Learn Esperanto, the New Universal Language*. In publishing a story both in English and Esperanto, science fiction was the obvious form because it could present a tale of tomorrow, when the whole world would speak the International Language. That was indeed the case in the short story, which also introduced moving hallways, concentrated sunlight, synthetic foods, radium pistols, and various other embellishments of a world two hundred years ahead.

During the late thirties, Forrest J. Ackerman, one of the world's leading science-fiction fans (today editor of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND), conducted an aggressive campaign to get readers of futuristic literature to take up Esperanto, even publishing amateur magazines in the language. His efforts aroused a limited enthusiasm, which has virtually disappeared in the intervening period.

THE CAVALIER'S experiment in Esperanto did not end with one story. Bob Davis announced that the international interest aroused by *In 2112* had led to further experimentation. "I am not wise enough to know whether or not such a feature would be successful, but I haven't any hesitation about giving the readers of this magazine an opportunity to express themselves," he said. Starting with the January 18, 1913, issue, he began a new series of stories which would be presented both in English and in Esperanto. He left the question of continuance up to the readers. The translations were done by Dr. Lowell. *The Lure of the Lavender Trees* (January 18, 1913) told of a shipwrecked party whose captain is drawn to his death by the ominous purple trees of an unknown atoll; it was followed by *The Fear of Life*, by Harold Titus, a dramatic lumberjack tale (January 25); *Marguerites* told of a seventeen-year-old miraculously saved from a life of prostitution by a crippled baby (February 1); and *The Spot Down Deep*, by Fred Sweet, a sweetness-and-light bit of nostalgia falsifying memory (February 8), brought down the curtain on the Esperanto experiment, followed by shredding criticism from its adherents.

"Esperanto—A Closed Incident," Bob Davis headed an item in the

February 22 issue. "...I stated at the outset that it was merely an experiment," he wrote, "one that I would continue if the majority approved. Well, the majority did not approve.

"That is the long and the short of it. If I published all the correspondence, the ensuing controversy would be interminable.

"If you will pardon me now, I will go back in my cage, pick a few porcupine quills out of my person, and get ready for the next issue, which will be in English."

One of Bob Davis' closest friends was the renowned humorist Irvin Shrewsbury Cobb. They had met at the tail end of Davis' newspaper days in 1904, and by 1911 Cobb was working on the staff of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST. His stories were so much in demand and so high-priced that they were beyond the budget of THE CAVALIER. But this was true primarily of Cobb's humorous stories. A horror story he had written in 1900 at the age of twenty four had been rejected by most of the leading magazines of America and had even been turned back by Bob Davis in 1911. The story was entitled *Fishhead*, and when Davis had refused it, he had written: "It goes past the powers of my pen to describe the effect *Fishhead* has upon me. It is inconceivable how one so saturated with the humors of life can present so appalling a picture as this. The moment in which *Fishhead* opened his trap of a mouth and sent out his skittering call summoning his avengers is absolutely terrifying.... It is quite the most remarkable demonstration of your power I have ever seen. . . . You are lucky to be able to write such an extraordinary tragedy while posing as a humorist and get away with it."

When Cobb was a beginner, magazines didn't want the story because of its utter gruesomeness. When he had become famous as a humorist, the contrast with his typical work put too much of a strain on the editor.

With the Cobb "endorsement" of "This is the only story I ever wrote that I could not sell," Davis worked up enough courage to run it in the January 11, 1913, issue of THE CAVALIER with three pages of quotes from editors who had previously rejected it, plus some background on the tale's history.

*Fishhead*, in retrospect, is certainly one of the great masterpieces of horror by an American writer. The title character is a mixture of Negro, Indian, and white, born with a face uncannily resembling a catfish's. He lives along Reelfoot Lake, where catfish grow six and seven feet long and weigh as much as two hundred pounds. Two "poor whites" wait for him in a dugout, ambush him outside his home, and kill him with a shotgun for having previously beaten them in a fistfight. Just before they pull the trigger, he sends a strange call over the water. Their boat is upset, and they are pulled under by tremendous catfish. When the three

bodies float ashore, Fishhead's is unmarked except for the gunshot wounds, but those of the two "poor whites" are so "marked and mauled" that their identities could not be determined.

Reporting on reader reaction in the February 1 THE CAVALIER, Bob Davis asserted that seventy five percent were favorable and twenty five percent against the story. He ran two pages of letters, but significantly the most ardent praise came from fellow horror-story writers George Allan England, John D. Swain, and William Holloway.

Time has vindicated Bob Davis completely. In fact, most of Cobb's humor is out of print and unavailable, but *Fishhead* is repeatedly being reprinted or anthologized and may turn out to be Cobb's supreme achievement. That this would be the case was determined early, when George T. Delacorte, Jr., founded THE FAMOUS STORY MAGAZINE, devoted to "The World's Best Stories from Modern and Classic Literature," and the very first issue, October, 1925, had *Fishhead* featured as one of the major attractions of the issue.

As THE CAVALIER approached the end of its first year as a weekly, it had become a highly unusual magazine, with offbeat concepts in storytelling and an excellent balance, made possible by 192 pages. To attempt to solidify the readers and give them something in common, the December 28, 1912, issue announced the Cavalier Legion, a brotherhood made up of readers, who would be identifiable by a red button with a green star in the center, supplied free to anyone who wrote in and asked for it. The slogan was "Good Fiction, Good Fellowship." It is not known just how much enthusiasm readers showed for the idea, but it is quite probable that Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, editor of ADVENTURE, got his idea for the formation of the American Legion (which eventually became the great veterans' group) from this source. ADVENTURE announced the concept in their November, 1914, issue, and hammered away at it until it eventually evolved into a national veterans' organization.

Despite Bob Davis' resourcefulness and good taste in selecting stories and keeping the magazine exciting, the major hope for its success rested in the new type of "scientific romance" which had been inaugurated by George Allan England's *Darkness and Dawn* and not in the reworked themes of discovering a method of manufacturing gold or cultivating an ape, or, as in the case of Gaston Leroux's *Balao; or, The Footprints on the Ceiling* (November 23-December 12, 1912), discovering the Missing Link, who can converse fluently with animals. Entertaining as these stories might have been, they lacked the element of novelty.

The sequel to *Darkness and Dawn*, titled *Beyond the Great Oblivion*, was featured on the cover of January 4, 1913, by Clinton Pcttee, who had illustrated *Tarzan of the Apes*. The scene showed Allan Stern and

Beatrice Kendrick, clothed in furs, turning to confront a pack of wolves trailing them through a forest in Manhattan, from which still rise the bent structures of gutted skyscrapers. The sequel begins virtually without a break from the last paragraph in *Darkness and Dawn*, and is enthrallingly imaginative. Allan and Beatrice set sail for Boston and are almost drowned in a cataract in the Atlantic Ocean off Long Island Sound. They rebuild an airplane found in the ruins of Providence, Rhode Island, and fly west. A "bottomless" chasm the other side of Pittsburgh appears to have no other side. Their plane gives out and drops them into the chasm, where they are captured by a race of humans, descended from survivors of a great cataclysm when a huge portion of the earth, possibly five hundred miles across, ripped out of the North American continent and was flung into space, to become a second moon (in a sense this is an early story of the concept of an "artificial" earth satellite). They win the confidence of this race by helping them fight off enemies and, in a ritual battle with its leader, Allan becomes ruler of the People of the Abyss and helps them once more "emerge into the sun."

*Beyond the Great Oblivion* was literally weasled out of George Allan England, who produced the ninety-thousand-word novel in segments and got paid piecemeal as he delivered it. The first portion brought one hundred dollars on August 21, 1912; the second, two hundred dollars on August 25; the third, one hundred dollars on September 12; and the balance of the novel, six hundred dollars on September 25. The rate of one thousand dollars represented 1% cents a word, a slight rate increase over *Darkness and Dawn*. In running the story, the editor footnoted that "*Darkness and Dawn* . . . was one of the most talked-of serials which ever appeared in THE CAVALIER—its imaginative power and realism recalling Jules Verne at his best." The four issues containing it were offered for sale, for those who had not read it.

Little time was wasted in securing the final novel in the trilogy, *The Afterglow*, when Davis found letters of approbation pouring in for *Beyond the Great Oblivion*. George Allan England delivered 16,200 words of the final story of February 25, 1913, and was paid \$850 for the completed 76,500-word novel on April 9, 1913. To encourage England, Davis gave him a shot at the higher-paying MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, buying a four-thousand-word nonfantasy, *The Sprucer*, for two hundred dollars on January 29, 1913, at a rate of about five cents a word.

In *The Afterglow*, Allan and Beatrice fly up to the earth's surface to prepare the way for recolonization from below. The ruins of the Metropolitan Opera House yield a cache of phonograph records and a phonograph. One of them is a recorded marriage ceremony, so the two pledge their troth as a minister dead fifteen hundred years intones the vows.

Three at a time they fly the people out of the great chasm, forming a new surface colony. Attacked by the subhumans first encountered on awakening in New York, they utterly exterminate them with a monumental forest fire which traps the horde against a river.

Beatrice bears Allan a son, who will eventually take over his leadership. The colony grows to one hundred thousand. Science is rediscovered, and soon there are many airplanes, printing presses, a shipyard, and even a monorail. The story ends with ringing hope for the future, now that the old systems no longer exist and mankind can build anew. "I see a world," concludes England in socialistic fervor, "where thrones have crumbled and kings are dust. The aristocracy of idleness has perished from the earth.

"I see a world without a slave. Man at last is free. Nature's forces have by science been enslaved ... a world in which no exile sighs, no prisoner mourns; a world on which the gibbet's shadow does not fall; a world where labor reaps its full reward—where work and worth go hand in hand!

"I see a world without the beggar's outstretched palm, the miser's heartless, stone stare, the piteous wail of want, the livid lips of lies, the cruel eyes of scorn."

The truth, however, was that England had not written a great socialistic tract, but he had written a marvelous scientific romance, which was destined to provide a few hours' escape from the devils he decried. In that respect it possessed more practicality than a good part of his political philosophy.

At the conclusion of the final installment, Bob Davis asked the readers whether they would like to see the three novels—all 216,000 words of them—brought out in hardcovers. At that time, Davis handled subsidiary rights for authors, including book, newspaper syndication, and moving picture. The response must have been heartening, for the trilogy appeared under the title of *Darkness and Dawn* from Small, Maynard and Company in 1914. The book carried the inscription: "To Robert H. Davis, unique inspirer of plots, do I dedicate this trilogy. G.A.E." It included as a frontispiece the P. Monahan full-color cover from *The Afterglow*, depicting Beatrice and Allan opening the lead box in which they found the phonograph. The endpapers were the line drawing from the cover of *Darkness and Dawn*, showing the two surveying the ruins of the skyscrapers in Manhattan. There were three interiors, one a black-and-white rendition of the cover of *Beyond the Great Oblivion* and two black-and-whites apparently drawn especially for the book by E. W. Gage. The volume sold for \$1.35 and saw at least three printings.

George Allan England, with some acknowledged help from Bob Davis, had slruck, in the *Darkness and Dawn* trilogy, a success formula

very similar to that which would make Edgar Rice Burroughs in the years immediately ahead one of the world's most widely read authors. Why he did not follow up on it is a literary puzzle. He would write a substantial number of science-fiction novels and short stories in the future, some of exceptional quality, but they would not be scientific romances.

Possibly part of the answer rested in his versatility. He could satisfactorily write virtually any type of story requested. He sold to almost all the other major pulps and some of the important slick magazines. They would buy almost any type of thing he wrote. With Edgar Rice Burroughs, it was different. When he wrote *The Outlaw of Torn* in answer to an editorial request for a historical novel, it would be summarily rejected. Whenever he deviated from the scientific romance or Tarzan, he either had trouble selling it or had to settle for lower rates. He was writing to support a family. He could not afford to experiment. This forced him to write primarily those things which he would have the least trouble placing, and these proved to be just the things that would bring him fame and fortune and would create an entire new school of science fiction.

THE CAVALIER in mid-1913 was a thick magazine, printed in large, clear type, selling for ten cents, with attractive covers but no interior illustrations at all. Though its readers' department contained long and fulsome blurbs of virtually every important forthcoming story, the stories, with rare exceptions, were presented as so many slices of cheese, without any intimation of what they were about other than their title.

Despite the masculine title of THE CAVALIER, there were many love stories published. These love stories were of a nature that had a general appeal, but the notion that THE CAVALIER was a men's magazine was not accurate. The readers'-department letters ran a high proportion of letters from women, most well satisfied with what they were getting. The covers, with some exceptions, highlighted a woman, even if she was but one of many participants in an action scene. Increasingly, an attractive woman's head in the identical manner and sometimes by the same artists that appeared on women-oriented publications like THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, THE WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION, THE RED BOOK, and COSMOPOLITAN graced the cover of THE CAVALIER.

It should be further stressed that THE ARGOSY and THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE followed a similar policy of appealing to women. The letters seemed to indicate that housewives were the leading female supporters of these magazines. They found in them escape from the drudgery or humdrum aspect of their lives, and the clean, wholesome fiction could be read by their children without the slightest qualm. The Munsey pulps

were family magazines, and unlike the dime novels of a previous era, were approved by the broad middle class of the United States.

## 9. "THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE" LOSES TARZAN

THE FULL WEIGHT of Frank A. Munsey's three-pronged experiment rested upon the shoulders of Bob Davis. With THE CAVALIER he had to prove whether an all-fiction pulp *weekly* was feasible. With THE ARGOSY, it was his job to see that its circulation did not decline much further, despite the fifty-percent increase in price to fifteen cents. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, which never had a base of readership as great as THE ARGOSY even at ten cents, had to hold and gain with the fifteen cent price.

The fate of THE CAVALIER was still very much in doubt, though it carried as firm a circulation as a weekly as it had as a monthly, probably at seventy-five thousand. THE ARGOSY had such a large base of readership, and such a reservoir of goodwill, that nothing tragic was likely to happen. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was another matter. It was plainly evident that its success or failure rested on the appeal of a single writer, Edgar Rice Burroughs, who had elicited a whirlwind of appreciation with *Under the Moons of Mars* and *Tarzan of the Apes*. Burdened with the responsibility of three magazines, Davis left Burroughs entirely in the hands of Thomas Norman Metcalf, who was in every sense Burroughs' real discoverer.

Discussing the sequel to *Tarzan of the Apes*, which Metcalf was pressing him for, Burroughs, in a letter dated December 5, 1912, mentioned the possibility of putting Tarzan in the Foreign Legion. In the meantime, he sent the revised historical novel, *The Outlaw of Torn*, in for another reading. On December 18 Metcalf rejected it for the third time.

Finally the eagerly awaited sequel to *Tarzan of the Apes*, tentatively titled *Ape Man*, was completed and mailed in by Burroughs on January 1, 1913. Pressed so constantly for a sequel to *Tarzan of the Apes*, Burroughs was understandably confident that the story would be accepted. His third child, John Coleman, was on the way, and the money from the story was urgently needed.

Then, to his utter consternation, Metcalf wrote on January 22 that *Ape Man* lacked "balance" and would be rejected.

The combination of the rejection of *The Outlaw of Torn* and *Ape Man* almost closed Burroughs' writing career. He responded on January 24 that he was thoroughly disgusted, that at this rate authorship was not the proper vehicle for supporting his family.

On January 27 Metcalf frantically telegraphed him not to get discouraged. The same day he dispatched the final rejection of the ninety-five-thousand-word *Ape Man* with a detailed chronicle of its faults and failings.

Now it was Metcalf's turn to worry. The success of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE depended upon Burroughs, and the maintenance of his own job depended on the continuance of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. It was evident that he was already out of his depth. He was handling a once-in-a-lifetime circulation booster like Burroughs with far less finesse than he exercised upon the scores of run-of-the-mill hacks that were grinding out an endless series of eminently forgettable stories for the new breed of pulps that were digesting millions upon millions of words per year.

"*The Gods of Mars* is coming out as a serial," he had announced in the December, 1912, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. "This yarn is a sequel to *Under the Moons of Mars*, of never-to-be-forgotten popularity. The author's imagination again riots over the periphery of our terrestrial neighbor. Once more we play with thoats and snarks and so forth, and six-legged gents, and the scientific paraphernalia that can exist nowhere except on Mars, where, as we learn from our savants, 'they do those things better.'"

Three pages of raves about *Tarzan of the Apes* and *Under the Moons of Mars* followed in a chorus that would continue for years. There was one point of discord. The readers were disappointed at the poor shake that Tarzan got at the end in losing the girl. They demanded a sequel in which this unfair situation would be remedied.

The column ended with the comment: "There are many other letters about *Tarzan*. Most all of them are complimentary, though lots of folks don't seem to like the finish and are sitting round and barking for a sequel.

"Mr. Burroughs wrote us a letter the other day, and he ended by saying: 'About a score of readers have threatened my life unless I promise to write a sequel to *Tarzan*—Shall I?'

"We wonder."

Now the sequel had been written and rejected, but all was well, because *The Gods of Mars*, the continuation of *Under the Moons of Mars*, had begun with the January, 1913, issue and would run through May, and the ecstatic letters of praise were already pouring in.

Following Metcalf's suggestion, Burroughs, in *The Gods of Mars*, had taken John Carter on a two-thousand-mile voyage down the river Iss, on which all Martians go at the age of one thousand, never to return. It flows into the valley of Dor, where a race of vegetable men wait to devour the unfortunates upon arrival. This finding is a savage thrust at



religion, questioning those who take dogma for granted. Such thrusts would occur again and again, even in the Tarzan stories, but remain unnoticed because they were attributed to savage or alien creatures rather than earthmen.

Tars Tarkas, the six-armed hideous-appearing but heroic Martian chieftain and friend of John Carter, figures in the adventures. John Carter rescues his own son from the aged black goddess Issus, returning to Helium in a stolen airship, to learn that Dejah Thoris, his wife, has left for the valley of Dor in search of her son. He finds her only as a revolving chamber in which she has been placed is slowly closing, not to reopen for three years. As she leaves his sight, he sees Phaidor, a Martian woman whom he had rejected, drive a dagger at the heart of Dejah Thoris. There the story closed, and if the readers had been disturbed at the inconclusive ending of *Tarzan of the Apes*, they were understandably beside themselves in frustration at the termination of *The Gods of Mars*.

The *same* line drawing of a four-armed Martian in bas-relief against a Martian sky that had headed each installment of *Under the Moons of Mars* was deliberately used almost like a trademark for all six chapters of *The Gods of Mars*. The fact that it was a sequel appeared on each issue's contents page, as well as prefacing the chapter.

Metcalf was considerably relieved when the manuscript of a thirty-two-thousand-word novelette, *The Inner World*, dealing with the adventures of David Innes in Pellucidar, the land inside the earth, was mailed to him and received on February 6. Since the mail from Chicago to New York took two days, the alacrity with which he read the story can be surmised by the fact that a check for four hundred and twenty dollars was dispatched on February 12, and this was the highest word rate Burroughs had so far received.

Metcalf's security was rudely shaken when word spread through the trade that Street & Smith Publications had bought the sequel to Tarzan for THE NEW STORY MAGAZINE. A letter from Burroughs confirmed the rumor.

Burroughs could not afford to lose the time he had put into *Ape Man*. He had surveyed the market, and Street & Smith's third contribution to the adventure pulp field, THE NEW STORY, impressed him as offering a possible market. THE NEW STORY was the result of many incarnations. It had originally been started by Street & Smith as GUNTER'S MAGAZINE. Failing to make it go, they had sold the title to the LaSalle Publishing Company of Chicago, who changed the title to THE NEW (GUNTER'S) MAGAZINE. Its present series dated from November, 1910, where it started from scratch as Volume 1, Number 1, and the title NEW STORY. Street & Smith took it back again in 1912 and made it a magazine similar in

policy and format to THE POPULAR MAGAZINE and PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE, carrying 192 pages for fifteen cents. In policy, its fiction was somewhat more exotic and not quite as forthright as its companions'.

Its editor was a moustached, bald-headed, good-natured lawyer named Archibald Lowry Sessions, who was on his way to becoming one of the pulp field's most capable and highly regarded editors. His first big editing job was on AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, and was obtained in a moment of pique on the part of publisher Ormond Smith with the original editor.

The magazine started with the issue of February, 1898, was general in nature, on slick paper, and contained fiction, articles, poetry, criticism, and humor. The secretary of its editor, Gilman Hall, wrote a derogatory note about the taste of Ormond Smith in fiction, which came to the publisher's eye. He fired the secretary and Gilman Hall, and put Sessions at the head of the magazine.

Sessions turned out to be a good choice, and when, after a shaky start in 1906, THE PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE needed straightening out, he was switched to that magazine and proved an excellent troubleshooter. Now he was fighting to make THE NEW STORY MAGAZINE a winner, and the submission of a sequel to *Tarzan of the Apes* by Edgar Rice Burroughs was manna from heaven. His offer of one thousand dollars for the story, made on February 8, 1913, was accepted two days later by Burroughs.

The news got around, and Bob Davis, who had been leaving THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE pretty much in the hands of Metcalf, for once was beside himself with anger. Years later, lines would appear in a letter to Burroughs dated December 29, 1916, "I will never forgive Metcalf for letting Street & Smith get the other story." He excoriated Metcalf for this blunder, and it may very well have been a factor leading to the dismissal of that editor in 1914.

It was a badly shaken Metcalf who wrote Burroughs February 26, 1913. The news had struck him as "incredible." He wrote Burroughs that he did not regard his action as "friendly." He theorized that it was taken in retaliation for his criticism of *Ape Man*, and he said if it had been intended to show him up, it had achieved its purpose.

He felt that Burroughs should have worked the story over and resubmitted it to give him a "square deal" and confirm a "friendly relationship."

Burroughs spared no feelings in his retort. "I am not writing stories out of friendship," he replied March 1; "I am writing because I have a wife and three children."

He did not stop there.

What type of friendship had Metcalf shown in asking for, then thrice rejecting, *The Outlaw of Torn*?

What type of friendship had he displayed in begging and pleading for a sequel to Tarzan and then rejecting it?

What type of friend is it, Burroughs asked, that expects a writer to place himself economically at the mercy of a subjective opinion and then regards it as an unfriendly act to sell a rejected story elsewhere?

A thoroughly chastened Metcalf asked Burroughs on March 7 to forget anything that may have been said in their exchange of letters and to set a price for first look at future manuscripts.

The poor judgment Metcalf had shown was now assuming the aspect of a catastrophe.

The sequel to the most popular story that THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE had ever printed, possibly the most popular story any American magazine had ever printed, was to be published in the pages of a direct competitor.

Since Burroughs, up to that date, had appeared exclusively in THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, the *only* place from which NEW STORY MAGAZINE could possibly draw readers would be THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE.

In an economic sense, had they continued to buy all of Burroughs' production, their word rate to him would have remained low and crept up gradually. Now he was in the position of being able to ask for the best bid from two competitive forces.

To further their woes, if they lost him completely, the best hope they had of keeping THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE solvent would be gone.

Edgar Rice Burroughs asked for five cents a word for first look at his stories in a letter of March 10.

Four days later, Metcalf countered with an offer of two cents a word, which was almost double what Burroughs had been getting.

On March 17 Burroughs accepted the two-cent rate *for the remainder of 1913 only*.

His ready acceptance might have appeared poor business considering his good bargaining position, but as it developed, his instincts were right in not pushing too far too fast. He had submitted *The Outlaw of Torn* to Sessions for NEW STORY MAGAZINE, and on March 28, 1913, it had been rejected. Street & Smith represented no surer market than Munsey.

The first story to receive the increased rate was *The Cave Girl*, a thirty-thousand-word novelette for which he was paid six hundred dollars on April 14. A sissified, anemic young Bostonian is shipwrecked on an uncharted island. The rigors of survival slowly convert him into a superb physical specimen, able to hold his own not only against wildlife but also against a lost tribe of primitives who have survived unknown on that island for ages. He is attracted to Nadara, a lovely island woman whom he takes as a mate. When rescue comes, he avoids it and chooses to remain on the island with the woman he loves. The story ends as the

landing party discovers a locket in a skin bag, "To Eugenie Marie Celeste de la Vois, Countess of Crecy, from Henri, her husband." The two had been lost twenty years earlier, and the reader becomes privy to the possibility that "The Cave Girl" may very well prove to be their daughter.

*The Cave Girl* was published in three installments, July-September, 1913, with a cover by Clinton Pettee. The timing of publication was calculated to have Burroughs appear in unbroken continuity now that the serialization of *Ape Man*, under the title of *The Return of Tarzan*, had commenced with the June, 1913, NEW STORY MAGAZINE, where it would run for seven installments, through December, 1913. They could not prevent any Burroughs fan from buying the competition, but they could see that he had no reason to stop buying THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE.

*The Return of Tarzan* was a sectionalized novel, a series of quite skillfully done adventures, which may have been what Metcalf meant when he complained that it lacked "balance." In phase one, a worldly, sophisticated Tarzan (who will even smoke a cigarette) travels from America to France, where he is almost killed in a duel; he conducts espionage among the Arabs; he engages in a victorious battle with a hungry lion; he is thrown into the sea from aboard ship by enemies, to reach the shores of Africa not far from where he was born and establish himself as a chief over a tribe of blacks; and he discovers "the City of Gold," the remnant of drowned Atlantis, whose men have mated with apes and become part-beast. The royal women have kept their bloodlines clean, and La, high priestess, falls in love with Tarzan, a prisoner. He escapes and takes from the ancient city a fabulous treasure in gold. Jane Porter, the girl he loves, has told Clayton she cannot marry him, and returning to Africa, is captured by the beast men of Opar but is saved from sacrifice at the hands of La by Tarzan. They are married, and the story ends.

*Tarzan of the Apes* was a scientific romance in spirit, but its sequel was scientific romance in fact, as were in part or wholly a large percentage of the many Tarzan novels to follow. Not only were the Tarzan stories very closely allied with Burroughs' other scientific romances, but in the future Tarzan would visit Pellucidar, scene of a series set in a land at the center of the earth.

The first three issues of NEW STORY MAGAZINE carrying *The Return of Tarzan* had full-color covers illustrating the story. The June and August, 1913, covers were by that master of book and magazine illustration, Newell Convers Wyeth. The last was used on the jacket of the first hardcover edition of *The Return of Tarzan*, published in 1915 by A. C. McClurg. Burroughs so admired it that he wrote to Sessions to

see if it were for sale. When Wyeth through Sessions asked one hundred dollars for the original, Burroughs refused, stating tartly, "Evidently he wants it more than I do."

The reader reaction was evidently so positive on the first installment of *The Return of Tarzan* that, on July 19, Sessions wrote Burroughs asking to see *The Outlaw of Torn* again. It was sent to him, and he tried to buy it for three hundred and fifty dollars. The low price was turned down, so on August 12, 1912, Sessions returned the novel to Burroughs, but raised the ante to five hundred dollars.

Thinking it over, Burroughs decided to accept, with the proviso that he be paid 2VS cents a word if it should prove to be a big hit with the readers. This "deal" was agreed to by Sessions in a letter of August 18 in which he offered a flat \$3,000 for another Tarzan story.

It is puzzling, contrasting the quality of what was being bought and published by the pulp magazines of 1913, why they were so reluctant to give *The Outlaw of Torn* a home. It involved the reader with its first page and carried him with pleasant color and excitement through to the end. The story, which was begun in the January, 1914, NEW STORY MAGAZINE and ran through to April, never received a cover illustration and was referred to as a "New Serial by the Author of *The Return of Tarzan*" Overshadowing it was the appearance of *Allan and the Holy Flower* (published in England as *The Holy Flower*), the latest novel by H. Rider Haggard, which had begun in the December, 1913, issue of NEW STORY MAGAZINE, in which *The Return of Tarzan* ended. Allan was Haggard's most popular character next to "She," and his appearance in this novel brought with it many of the romantic, mystical, and lost-race elements that were the author's trademark. It featured three covers, including several by N. C. Wyeth, and ran for seven installments, ending in the June, 1914, number.

There was no question that Street & Smith was the big pulp competition for Munsey. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE was, at least temporarily, the circulation leader; THE PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE was holding its own; NEW STORY MAGAZINE was featuring the same fantastic and off-trail stories which had previously been primarily a specialty of the Munsey pulps; and now coming up very strong in circulation was TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE. The TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE had begun publication with its March 1, 1910, issue, with a format 10% inches high by eight inches wide, thirty-six pages for five cents, with the slogan of "Tops Everything for Boys."

At first it did not worry Munsey, because its format was identical with that of the dime novels, many of which were still published at that date,

and in appearance and policy it was aimed at the early teen-agers. The cover boasted that it was "Edited by Burt L. Standish," author of the immensely popular Frank Merriwell series.

Actually, it was not started with the idea of continuing. The post office had been threatening to cancel the second-class mailing privilege for dime novels for a long time. They contended that even though these were dated and issued on a weekly schedule, they were *books* and not magazines, because they contained only a single complete novel. Street & Smith decided to issue a magazine identical in format and price with the dime novels, with contents made up of a selection of novelettes, short stories, and a serial. If the post office accepted it, they intended to add a few short features to the back of every dime novel they published and in that manner get around any future possibility of being closed down by a technicality. Gilbert Patten, who wrote the Frank Merriwell series under the name of Burt L. Standish, had offered to edit the magazine, suggesting that his name would give it a connotation of respectability. He conceived the title of TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE and wrote a number of stories for it about a college hero named Cliff Sterling, under the pen name of Julian St. Dare. He edited the first four numbers, and the magazine, instead of collapsing as expected, began to sell.

Through office politics, Harry Thomas, a Street & Smith editor, secured control of the magazine and with its November 1, 1910, issue had it converted into a semi-monthly 192-page pulp selling for ten cents—a direct competition to the Munsey magazines for their younger group of readers. By 1913 the magazine appeared three times a month, featuring Jack London, Gilbert Patten, F. Britton Austin, J. S. Fletcher, Bertram Atkey, Octavus Roy Cohen, A. Conan Doyle, William Wallace Cook, Ellis Parker Butler, Johnston McClulley, W. Bert Foster, and many other good authors. The slant was to the high teens, and it went in heavy for sports stories and light on science fiction, though a series of scientific detective stories by Michael White, featuring the dauntless Proteus Raymond, was extremely imaginative, even involving atomic energy in one story.

It is quite possible that the tendency of the competition gradually to increase frequency of publication was at least in part prompted by the example of THE CAVALIER, which appeared on the newsstand each Saturday, so that the working man who was committed to a five-and-one-half- or 6-day work week could treat himself to weekend entertainment for only ten cents after he cashed his paycheck.

Following the publication of *The Afterglow*, by George Allan England, THE CAVALIER appeared to slow down on the quantity and quality of its science fiction. Perhaps it was a difficult job to get enough for a weekly, but more probably it was the result of the great wordage of science fiction

featured by THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, depleting the available supply. During 1913 THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE ran fourteen stories of science fiction in twelve issues, eleven of them *novels*, and only two of the novels not completed within the calendar year. The wordage encompassed by these stories was somewhere close to 550,000, or almost equivalent to the total wordage of twelve issues of some of today's science-fiction magazines.

THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE in February, 1913, featured the highly off-trail fantasy *The Second Man*, by Lee Robinet, a novel in which Kenmore, an American, enters the Canadian forests, to find a segment where a man and a woman are reenacting the legend of Adam and Eve, with a young girl who calls herself Lilith living with them. The animals of the forest seem to be subservient to the will of the somewhat sinister "Adam," and the attempts of Kenmore to fathom this strange situation end with his breaking the hold of Adam on Eve and Lilith. The result is a memorable fantasy, published in hardcovers as *The Forest Maiden* by Browne & Howell Co., Chicago, in 1914 and selling for \$1.25. Veteran fantasy collectors had suspected that Lee Robinet was a pen name, and that it had previously appeared and would again as the author of other non-fantasies, including *In-Bad Man* and *The Bad Man*. Robinet was unusual inasmuch as he was the pen name of a pen name. Lee Robinet stories were submitted by Robert Ames Bennet, author of one of the most widely sought-after lost-race novels, *Thyra—A Romance of the Polar Pit*, published in book form by Holt, New York, in 1901. In that novel, survivors of a Norse party have endured in a great arctic abyss in which also survives a monstrous reptile of the dinosaur period, as well as a sub-human race of men. Less well known is his *The Bowl of Baal*, a four-part novel in NEW STORY MAGAZINE, November, 1916-February, 1917. The plot is virtually identical with *Thyra*, except for the locale. An air pilot discovers an unknown city in Arabia, near to which lives a prehistoric lizard that, true to science-fiction tradition, must be dispatched.

Robert Ames Bennet was the pen name of F. G. Browne, of 315 Keystone Avenue, River Forest, Illinois, and he was paid five hundred dollars for the seventy-thousand-word novel *The Second Man* on October 30, 1912. The question is raised as to whether there was a further connection between him and the Browne of Browne & Howell, who published *The Second Man* in book form.

*The Brain Blight*, a ninety-thousand-word novel by Jack Harrower, of the discovery of a South American plant that can cause death, mental bcl'uddlement, and loss of will, was printed complete in the March, 1913, issue, and the same issue began a three-part novel, *Siren's Island*, by J. Earl Clausen, in which a bona-fide siren capable of wondrous miracles

is discovered on an island in the Aegean Sea and is brought back to civilization, miracles and all.

J. Earl Clausen appeared in June with a complete eighty-four-thousand-word novel titled *The Black Comet*, based on the time-worn but well-handled theme of a comet on apparent collision course with the earth and its effect on the structure of civilization. *The Mastodon-Milk-Man*, a three-part novel by C. McLean Savage, which began in the same issue, was an early superman story where unusual physical strength is obtained by drinking the milk of a mastodon frozen for ages in the ice.

June also contained the short story *Spawn of Infinitude*, by Edward S. Pilsworth, telling of a meteor which strikes the earth, bringing with it spores that grow into tentacled, man-eating plants which are eventually destroyed by an avalanche of snow.

Without break THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE continued to feed its readers fantasies—Perley Poore Sheehan, former editor of THE SCRAP BOOK, contributing the sixty-eight-thousand-word *The Copper Princess* complete in the September issue. The mummy of a beautiful Inca princess is brought back to life by the electrical invention of a woman scientist, Marie Pavlovna. It was not too many years since Marie Curie had discovered radium, so it was no longer incredible that a woman might make an important scientific discovery. The girl falls in love with the man she first sees upon awakening and, after a series of adventures, is mortally wounded while killing his enemy with her bare hands. At the end of the story she is again returned to her mummy case as he first saw her. Many of the elements of the scientific romance are found in this tale, but what is lacking is a truly imaginative and colorful background setting.

The October THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE contained a short science fantasy of a type that would not become popular for another thirty years, of an old man who had an electrical device for killing flies and a great imagination for storytelling. It was titled *To Slay at Will*, by J. Klinck, but took a distinct second place to "All-Story Table-Talk" in the same issue. "Mr. Burroughs was in town the other day and we had meals together, *et cetera*," it started, "and discussed the general condition of literature and the particular state of affairs in the Burroughs Factory. The outlook is very bright for all Mr. Burroughs' friends, because there are several good stories already under way in the foundry and all hands are working overtime."

Then the announcement was made that *A Man Without a Soul*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, would be published complete in the November issue.

The examination of all evidence strongly suggests that there never was any lunch or dinner with the editors of I in. ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and Edgar Rice Burroughs. There is no record of such in the comprehensive



correspondence of the author, and he would apparently not meet any of them until the middle of 1914, when Bob Davis would *pay his expenses* to come to New York for a discussion.

The announcement appears to have been a bit of poetic license, but the Burroughs stories being readied for publication did exist. Of special interest in the readers' department of that issue was "A Martian Glossary," supplied by Edgar Rice Burroughs, of the proper names and common nouns of his Martian stories. It would contain definitions of the following type: "Thark—a Martian city; also a Martian horde"; "Jeddak—an emperor"; "Thoat—a green Martian horse."

The editor said he was presenting the glossary in anticipation of a third novel in the Martian series to start soon.

"Edgar Rice Burroughs' *A Man Without a Soul*—A Story Like Tarzan," blazoned the cover of the November THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. The plot had elements that could have made it an extremely powerful novel, but it appeared hastily written. A professor, seeking to make synthetic men, has created twelve which are human parodies and distortions. A thirteenth appears perfect in body and leads the escape of the other "monsters" and then engages in a series of Tarzan-like adventures in the tropics. Despite all his noble attributes, the question of whether he is truly a human arises, the urgency for an answer intensified by a romance that has developed between him and a girl. Eventually, experiment Number 13 turns out to have been a real human with a lapse of memory substituted for a laboratory experiment. The twelve artificial men are killed off in a series of wild adventures.

The biological aspects of progress always interested Edgar Rice Burroughs, particularly the possibility of creation of synthetic life, organ transplants, and crossing of species, and he would return to these themes in future works.

The original title of *The Man Without a Soul* had been *Number 13*, and it appeared in book form from McClurg in 1929 as *The Monster Men*. Burroughs received from THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE \$1,165 in payment for the story.

Brain transplants were accomplished in *The House of Sorcery*, by Jack Harrower (author of *The Brain Blight*), a four-part novel which began in the same issue as *The Man Without a Soul*. Harrower's imagination also conceived of a means of dissolving a man's bones within his body while he still lived.

*The Warlord of Mars*, the third in the series, opened in the December THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE with a cover that was unique, for while it showed a manacled Dejah Thoris, Martian princess, with a guard, it had in the background the four-armed Martian with his spear which had been

used on each chapter of all three novels. It would disappear only when THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, at a later date, would cut out interior illustrations, and even then it still would be incorporated into the colored covers.

Dejah Thoris is carried off by a Martian black man and pursued through many strange and unusual lands by John Carter to effect her rescue, accompanied by his ten-legged Martian dog, Woola. He almost succeeds in rescuing Dejah Thoris in the nation of Kaol, in whose ranks of red-skinned people he has fought off an attack of the four-armed green men. At the South Pole he enters the country of the yellow men, who possess an unusual degree of scientific achievement, including their own air-producing plant. Eventually he rescues his wife (married in *Under the Moons of Mars*) and her companions, Phaidor and Thuvia, and is elected Jeddak of Jeddaks, or Warlord of all Mars.

An outline of the story fails to do justice to its high adventure, imagination, humor, and satire. Among the Burroughs fans it has generally become the favorite of the Martian series, because it presents so comprehensive a picture of the planet and its races. It ended in the March, 1914, issue of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, the last monthly number.

Edgar Rice Burroughs had mailed *The Warlord of Mars* to Metcalf on July 8, 1913, under the title of *The Prince of Helium*. It was 57,052 words in length, and on July 16, 1913, he was paid \$1,141. It was the last Burroughs story THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE bought in 1913, during which time *The Return of Tarzan* ran in NEW STORY MAGAZINE.

On January 29, 1914, Metcalf wrote Burroughs offering him 2Vi cents a word for anything they took and stating that they could use fifty thousand words a month.

Burroughs accepted the offer as far as word rate was concerned on February 3 but did not commit himself to delivering any special amount of wordage.

THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was fighting hard to pin Burroughs down exclusively. With the Burroughs spearhead, supplemented by a great quantity of fantastic stories, it had shown such substantial gains in circulation that Frank A. Munsey had ordered an increase in the frequency of publication to *weekly*, following the March, 1914, issue. It is quite likely that the editors would have preferred a twice-a-month schedule to start, like THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. THE CAVALIER, as a weekly, was having a tough time establishing itself, and the prospects of a second weekly were not alluring. To this, Frank A. Munsey's answer was that THE CAVALIER had been a failing monthly made weekly as an experiment. THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was a vigorous, successful monthly made weekly because the time was right. There were also intimations

that THE CAVALIER might be discontinued altogether if THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE proved a money-maker on a weekly schedule. As a weekly, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE would need Burroughs more than ever.

Burroughs, nevertheless, had been testing around trying to establish other markets, with the objective of gaining an increase in word rates and better bargaining power. Among the magazines he queried was ADVENTURE. Arthur Sullivan Hoffman had replaced Duncan Norton-Taylor as its editor in 1911, and for roughly twenty years would manage the magazine in such a manner as to make it one of the great prestige names among the pulps. Hoffman had been Theodore Dreiser's managing editor on DELINEATOR, issued by Butterick Publications, which owned the Ridgway Company, which in turn had launched ADVENTURE. In a reply to a Burroughs inquiry dated December 4, 1913, he confirmed what science-fiction readers have long surmised from circumstantial evidence, that Hoffman had a strict policy against science fiction and fantasy. "We avoid supernatural and highly improbable stories," he wrote, implying at the same time that Burroughs need not bother submitting anything of that type, and no special enthusiasm was expressed to see material of any other type.

NEW STORY MAGAZINE was to lose the temporary advantage it had gained by the purchase of *The Return of Tarzan* and *The Outlaw of Torn*. Burroughs had completed one of his most impressive novels, *The Mucker*, a study of environment on character and the regeneration of an undesirable. In the story development, there were vigorous sequences at sea reminiscent of Jack London's *The Sea Wolf*, and an island on which lives a tribe of Japanese samurai, out of touch with the rest of the world for hundreds of years. This fine adventure story was offered to Sessions of NEW STORY MAGAZINE on October 29, 1913, and rejected December 8, 1913, and may previously have been turned down by THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE. NO logical explanation of why so suitable a story should have been turned down can be rationalized.

Burroughs had completed a third Ape Man story, *The Beasts of Tarzan*, on February 9, 1914. When Metcalf heard of it, he sent a telegram on February 17 offering two thousand dollars. Instead of accepting, Burroughs wrote to Sessions and said he could have the third Tarzan story for the three thousand dollars previously offered. Sessions countered on February 28, 1914, with two thousand dollars, reneging on his bid made August 18. Burroughs then wrote Metcalf that he could have *The Beasts of Tarzan* for two thousand, five hundred dollars; Metcalf accepted it in his letter of March 3, 1914.

This was a great coup for Metcalf and THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, because it meant they not only had ensured the cream of Burroughs'

production for themselves but also had pulled him away from a direct competitor. Sessions would send letters all through 1914 asking for more Burroughs, but he had blown his golden opportunity. For Metcalf, the victory had come too late. Before the deal was closed, he had written Burroughs on February 25 and told him that there were going to be major changes at Munsey and he would be shifted from his present job.

There was no question that the job change for Metcalf was tied in with the impending weekly publication of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, but why he should be changed when the work load would be getting greater, not smaller, was not made immediately clear.

The heavy emphasis on science fiction and fantasy remained unchanged. Since the switch to fifteen cents, the stress in THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE had been on novels, and this was primarily the case with all Munsey magazines. Still, now and then a short work of science fiction of merit appeared, and one such was *The "V" Force* (December, 1913), by Fred C. Smale, about a strange bar of metal from Tibet which periodically projects a force which draws life from all creatures near it, and the frantic efforts of its owners to dispose of it when it becomes evident that London is in grave danger.

It was also easy to see the early influence of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes* in other stories which set their locale in a strange, foreboding, or exotic clime and glorified the strength and philosophy of the primitive. J. Earl Clausen, who had authored *The Black Comet*, contributed a complete novel to the January, 1914, issue, in which a young sailor, Matt Durgin, shipwrecked on an arctic shore, becomes a member of a tribe of Eskimo and gradually achieves great strength and native skill. A white woman is cast ashore in another wreck. They are married Eskimo fashion; a child is born and dies. There is a return to civilization, and the girl drives him from her and he goes back to the North. Passing up an opportunity to marry a "civilized" man, she repents and returns to him. The story, called *The Outsider*, is an adventure and love "epic" of considerable effectiveness.

Rex T. (Todhunter) Stout, who would later become one of the world's leading detective-story writers as the creator of Nero Wolfe, was a regular contributor to the Munsey pulps, but his complete novel *Under the Andes* (February, 1914), in which the remnants of an Incan civilization are discovered in Peru, is considered by the serious collectors of old science fiction and pulp magazines to be the best of his early work. Carried four miles underground by a river, two men and a French girl discover that the Incas have lived in a subterranean world for four hundred years and have degenerated into hairy creatures only four feet high. The girl doubles as a goddess in the strange religious rites of the

creatures and becomes the select of their king. There are scores of adventures (including one with a prehistoric reptile with hypnotic powers), leading to escape. The king is killed, and the girl also dies in the desperate finale of an extraordinarily vigorous and well-written fantastic adventure.

The February issue also featured the beginning of a highly unusual fantasy serial, *The Devil and Dr. Foster*, by J. Earl Clausen, which ran for four installments, until the March 14 number. The efforts of Dr. Foster, a pastor, to get donations to build a new church are constantly foiled by a foundling, Ike Jackson, who has been seen with horns and hooves, seems responsible for mysterious fires, produces a salve which makes it possible to understand animals, and causes the odor of fire and brimstone to pervade the town. Things are turned right eventually, but Ike Jackson disappears, and the idea that he had supernatural powers is sustained. Despite the similarity in title to the novel by David H. Keller, M.D., *The Devil and the Doctor*, an ingenious work which makes the Devil out to be the good guy and God the bad guy, there is no relationship in the plots in the two stories.

That the editors either listened carefully to the requests of their readers or planted letters pointing in the direction to coincide with their future plans was confirmed by the complete novel *The Woman of the Pyramid*, by Perley Poore Sheehan, which led off the March issue. A reader had enthused about that author's *The Copper Princess* and asked that a similar type of story be written with an Egyptian locale. A modern man in Egypt travels back in time, to find himself the object of desire of an ancient Egyptian princess. Mysticism, reincarnation, mystery, lust, and vengeance mix in generous quantities to make a thrilling offbeat novel.

#### 10. "THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE" AND "THE CAVALIER" COMBINE

THE MARCH, 1914 issue of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was its last as a monthly. Frank A. Munsey had been watching the circulation figures and had decided the time was right to gamble on an increased frequency of publication.

*The Warlord of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, ended in the March, 1914, issue but the first number of ALL-STORY WEEKLY, dated March 7, 1914, would also feature a complete novelette by him, titled *The Eternal Lover*. The twenty-four-thousand-word story had been submitted to Metcalf as *Nu of the Neocene*, but he changed the title and sent a check to Burroughs at 550 "A" Avenue, Coronado, California, for six hundred dollars on January 7, 1914.

ALL-STORY WEEKLY could scarcely have found a more effective story to attract new readership and hold the old. *The Eternal Lover* is the story of Nu, a prehistoric man who has been trapped in a cave and held in suspended animation for one hundred thousand years. He awakes on Tarzan's African "estate." In addition to Tarzan himself and his mate, Jane, their infant son, Korak, the Negro nursemaid, Esmeralda, and other Burroughs stalwarts make their appearance. A key character is Victoria Custer, who may be a modern reincarnation of a primitive love Nu left behind in the Neocene. Victoria is the sister of Barney Custer, of Beatrice, Nebraska, who would feature in a yet-to-be-published but previously written novel by Burroughs, *The Mad King*.

*The Eternal Lover* is a superb story, one of Burroughs' most skillful, in which Victoria seems to "remember" Nu from a previous life and finally decides to leave civilization behind her and brave the dangers of the jungle with the man she loves. Nu has one skill which will assist them, an ability to converse with animals.

The ALL-STORY WEEKLY was also an unquestionable bargain. The price had been cut back to ten cents for weekly publication, but the pages had been reduced only by sixteen, from 240 to 224. Fantasy lovers were given, in addition to the Burroughs story, a pleasant aperitif in the context of *The Overland Eel*, by Frank Condon, a short tale of a species of Chinese eel so electrically charged that it can generate enough current to propel a trolley car or kill a man.

The ALL-STORY WEEKLY behaved like a prizefighter with a deadly right hand who forgets he has a left and keeps tossing the haymaker. There were other Burroughs manuscripts in the safe, and they were rushed into print with almost indecent frequency. "In this story," the editors said of *The Mad King*, "Barney Custer and his friend, Lieutenant Butzow, land plumb in the middle of a patriotic intrigue, said intrigue being entirely surrounded by the land of Lutha, which, as all regular lovers of romance know, is bounded on the north by morality, on the south by affection, on the east by fidelity, and on the west by love. It is only a little ways from Zenda and Graustark. And now you get it, don't you?"

To dispel any possible doubts, readers were further told: "Custer, the young Nebraskan . . . a beautiful princess . . . a runaway horse, an automobile accident, a sick king, a political muddle, and wallops to the right and left of us, and you are shot through as vivid a tale of royal treachery as you will often get served steaming hot off the printing press."

*The Mad King* had been purchased earlier than *The Eternal Lover*, December 3, 1913, and eight hundred and eighty dollars paid for its forty-four-thousand words. But in reserve was still another Burroughs

story bought long before that, the first of the Pellucidar series, paid for at the rate of four hundred and twenty dollars for thirty-two thousand words on February 12, 1913, and titled *The Inner World*, but published as *At the Earth's Core*, a four-part serial, April 4-April 25. Readers were introduced to David Innes, heir of a wealthy mine owner, who links up with Professor Abner Perry, an inventor who has built an "iron mole" that can drill its way through the earth. Five hundred miles down, they emerge in a tropical land, heated by the core of the earth, which hangs like a molten sun at its center. They meet prehistoric monsters and primitive humans, and David Innes finds Dian the Beautiful, whose function in the story is obvious. Returning to the surface in the mole to get necessary materials to hasten the progress of the people on the interior, Innes is parted from his beloved Dian, who has fallen into the hands of an arch enemy. As he did in *Under the Moons of Mars*, Burroughs ended the first of the Pellucidar series as though it were the installment of a serial rather than a complete novel.

The readers' columns of the ALL-STORY WEEKLY would have to be read to be believed. The raves about Burroughs were perpetual and were extensive enough to make for an interesting article on their own merits. Nor was there any mistaking the enthusiasm for other works of science fiction published during the same period. Perley Poore Sheehan's *The Ghost Mill* (April 4) was a well-handled novel about an apparent perpetual-motion machine that turns out to be a device for drawing electromagnetic power from a giant vein of iron ore. *The Queen of Sheba* (April 18), a complete novel by the same author, continued in the vein of his *The Copper Princess*, with the "possible resuscitation or reincarnation of one of the most beautiful women in the world."

"Pseudoscientific" was the phrase used to announce *False Fortunes*, by Frank Conly, which started in the April 18 issue and ran in three parts through to May 2, a story in which an element, "Id," is discovered that can transmute metals at will. It turns out to have been an immensely dense metal created through an "implosion," a concept which science fiction as well as science has continued to explore. It may have been the first use of the term "pseudoscientific" in a Munsey magazine, but "pseudoscientific fiction" was used repeatedly by H. G. Wells in letters to Arnold Bennett, years earlier.

The May 2 issue, in which *False Fortune* concluded, contained a complete novel of witchcraft and a death curse for the first man who kissed the heroine or to whom she gave her love. It was titled *Flaunted Legacy*, and the name of its author, Paul Regard, had appeared under stories previously. Paul Regard was a pen name for Perley Poore Sheehan, and

there would be other fantasies under that name in the future, leading through to nine stories about Kwa of the Jungle, an imitation of Tarzan published in 1932 and 1933 in THRILLING ADVENTURES.

The April 25, 1914, issues of both ALL-STORY WEEKLY and THE CAVALIER carried the news that the two weeklies would be combined. A blue four-page insert written by Frank A. Munsey announced that with its May 16 issue the name of ALL-STORY WEEKLY would be changed to ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY, and there was also the possibility that the name would later be simplified. Munsey quite frankly stated that the reason the magazine was called ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY instead of CAVALIER ALL-STORY was that the "All-Story" title best described the publication's contents. This led one to draw the obvious conclusion that Munsey felt that it was the *title* of THE CAVALIER which had held it back, not its contents.

Reading between the lines of Bob Davis' "Heart to Heart Talks" in THE CAVALIER as he amplified upon Frank A. Munsey's merger announcement, it was obvious that the change saddened him. THE CAVALIER had been, as much as any magazine he had ever edited, his baby. In its pages he had introduced many writers destined to become famous. He had established through the readers' columns and the Cavalier Legion a close rapport with his readers. The end of THE CAVALIER was in a sense his failure as an editor.

The magazine had crested with the conclusion of George Allan England's *Darkness and Dawn* trilogy, ending with the July 5, 1913, number. At a time when THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE was featuring Edgar Rice Burroughs nearly every month and offering the equivalent of a science-fiction novel a month, the use of fantasy slackened in THE CAVALIER.

A particularly well-written novelette was *Kdlitd—The Mystery* (July 26, 1913), by Varick Vanardy, a fantasy of the transmigration of souls, and about the anguish of young love. Vanardy was a frequent contributor to the Munsey magazines, and a number of his novels would later go into hardcover. A dedication in one of his books, *Up Against It* (Macaulay Co., 1920), found by dime-novel collector Willis E. Hurd, contained an inscription from the author that indicated that he was Frederick Van Rensselaer Dey, the popularizer of the famed Nick Carter series. Actually the pen name Varick Vanardy was used on the early Nick Carter novels.

Of above-average merit was *Kilowat-Frankenstien-Jones*, a short story by Paul T. Gilbert in the August 2 issue, telling of the building of an electrically powered robot in the form of a man, with a phonograph installed for delivering messages. Historically interesting was Alex S. Briscoe's *When the Air Fleet Struck* (September 6), in which an American air fleet turns back a Japanese invasion of the West Coast without aid



of surface ships. Briscoe returned with *The Air Pirate* (October 4), a rather routine adventure of the raiding of ocean vessels by criminals in hydroplanes.

Particularly significant in the last months of THE CAVALIER was the shift of J. U. Giesy toward the writing of science fiction. His Semi-Dual occult detective stories in collaboration with Junius B. Smith had made colorful reading and were very popular. The most recent was *The House of the Ego* (September 20-October 4, 1913), in which Semi-Dual, employing the use of astrological forecasts, solves the case of a woman who through hypnotism and suggestion is about to give all her fortune to a mystic. An important part of the success of the Semi-Dual stories was the mysterious background of crystal balls, ritual cobras, Oriental villains, and other symbols of the unknown.

*The Blue Bomb*, a three-part short novel by Giesy in the issues of November 8 to November 22, was cut from a more specific cloth. The Japanese have secured from Karloff, a Russian seeking to overthrow the Czar, a flying radio-controlled bomb. They aim to provoke a war with the United States and use these self-propelled missiles to win it. The Russian, through his more implicit understanding of the radio controls, motivates the bombs and has them destroy the Japanese base of operations. In this effort, he is assisted by an American drifter who has rehabilitated himself.

The Japanese did get to use their aerial guided missiles in *All for His Country*, a future-war novel published by THE CAVALIER in four installments (February 21-March 14, 1914). Giesy had originally submitted the eighty-thousand-worder as *The Miracle* and was paid five hundred dollars for it November 26, 1913. "The Miracle" was a wingless airship, lifted by antigravity screens, whose secret involved radioactive matter, which dropped magnetic bombs that were attracted to anything metallic. It was the invention of a patriotic American, but when offered to the government, its construction was blocked by special war interests. When the United States is invaded by the Japanese, and San Francisco and New York fall before the accuracy of guided missiles, the United States starts a crash program to build "The Miracle," while ordering its battered armed forces to sustain a holding-and-delaying action. When "The Miracle" eventually goes into action, it stops the Japanese land advance and sinks their fleet, and the Japanese sue for peace.

For the year in which it appeared, *All for His Country* was a superior future-war story, well written, imaginative, and with rational development. It anticipated the superiority of air power over sea fleets and took into consideration practical politics and the influence of special interests. It deserved the hardback publication it received in 1915 from the

Macauley Company, New York, which carried a replica of the cover from the February 21, 1914, THE CAVALIER, showing "The Miracle" suspended over a Japanese airplane as a frontispiece. Library of Congress records list this book as priced at fifty cents, but this must be an error, for the volume was too good a piece of bookmaking, and it is probable that the actual price was \$1.50.

*All for His Country* was virtually the only important work of science fiction THE CAVALIER published during the four months it survived in 1914. There was, however, a short story of unusual interest to today's fantasy collectors. A book called *The Vicarion*, by a little-known author named Gardner Hunting, was issued by the United School of Christianity Publishing Company, Kansas City, in 1926. It appeared to have been paid for by the author, and because it was remaindered in the 1940s, is a common item on the collector's shelf. The story was outstanding, concerning a man who discovers that every event that has ever taken place or *will* take place has made an impression on the "ether," and his machine, called the Vicarion, can reproduce it in full living color, roaring sound, and overpowering smell. As the machine comes into common use, it causes chaos, and finally a great mob smashes into the inventor's home to destroy him. Anticipating this, he has joined the mob, after projecting a duplicate image of himself for them to wreak their wrath upon. Gardner Hunting had been for a period an editor of Street & Smiths' PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE.

The same Gardner Hunting had a highly unusual short story, titled *Tinfoil Charley*, in the March 14, 1914, issue of THE CAVALIER, in which a murder is committed and two suspects, virtually identical in girth, hair-line, and scars, fall to their death from the window of a building during a scuffle. When the police rush to street level to examine "the two heaps of crumpled flesh and rags," they are frustratingly aware that in every fundamental detail the men cannot be told apart and that it will not be possible to tell which of them is the murderer.

Bob Davis, editor of THE CAVALIER, who was a superb raconteur, led off the "Heart to Heart Talks" of the April 18, 1914, issue with an anecdote of a Negro on the witness stand being asked an enormously elaborated question which he couldn't conceivably understand and replying: "Most doubtless."

"If anybody wants to know from me whether or not I think THE CAVALIER is the greatest magazine now in circulation, I have no hesitation in replying, 'Most doubtless,'" Bob Davis wrote in his editorial in that issue.

In the same issue he had asked readers to send him the names of three people they thought might be interested in reading Tin; CAVALIER,

and he would send them sample copies. There was little question that he thought the magazine was to continue.

The next week, the issue of April 25, 1914, the announcement was made that THE CAVALIER would combine with the ALL-STORY WEEKLY.

The technique Frank A. Munsey utilized in retaining the nonduplicating readership of both magazines with minimal loss can only be admired. Beginning three issues before the combination, he ran in each of the two weeklies the serials that had begun in the other. These were run as *supplements* to the full complement of stories.

THE CAVALIER started in the April 25 number the first installment of *Happily Ever After*, by Martha M. Stanley, and twenty-four extra pages; May 2 added *A Prize for Princes*, by Rex T. Stout; and the very last issue, May 9, began *The Mingling of the Waters*, by William H. Hamby, and seventy-two pages in addition to the 192 normally carried by the ten-cent weekly.

The ALL-STORY WEEKLY began in its issue of April 25 *Captain Velvet's Revolt*, by Edgar Franklin, adding twenty-four pages to the 224 it customarily ran; May 2 began *The Grand Getaway*, by A. H. C. Mitchell, and forty additional pages; and finally, on May 9, a western-story writer of rising popularity, whom Bob Davis had included in the issue of THE CAVALIER of the same date, Zane Grey, appeared with the first installment of *The Lone Star Rangers*.

The combination of the two magazines, appropriately titled ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY, took place with the issue of May 16, 1914. *The Beasts of Tarzan*, subtitled "Another Romance of the 'Ape-Man,'" was featured on the cover, and showed Tarzan ready to loose a shaft from a giant bow, with Sheeta, a leopard he has befriended, beside him. From the viewpoint of the average reader, this was an ideal Tarzan story. A fiendish Russian, Rokoff, enemy of Tarzan, has escaped from a French military prison and is out to revenge himself by doing injury to Jane and Korak, her son. He kidnaps the son, uses him as a means of getting Tarzan and Jane aboard the ocean freighter *Kincaid*, and finally strands Tarzan on an island off the coast of Africa. Tarzan gains control of a group of apes and makes a friend of a panther. Attacked by a marauding band of mainland Negroes, he kills all but Mugambi, their chief, and with this strange "army," which gives the book its title, returns to the mainland and sets off in search of his son. Thrill after thrill is presented with pace, richness of situation, and economy of words that would have provided a good shooting script for a moving picture. This is not one of the best of the Tarzans, but it is related with such a sure professional hand that there could be no questioning its appeal. It ran for live installments, through the June 13 issue, and back-to-back with it

was the man destined to be the most popular western-story writer of all time, Zane Grey, with the action-packed, gripping novel, *The Lone Star Ranger*. The readers got 240 pages for their ten cents.

If *The Beasts of Tarzan* was not quite enough for the fantasy buffs, there was a novelette of a "lost" colony in the Aleutian Islands that had established a community unknown to the outside world, convinced that civilization was to be destroyed and they would be the only humans remaining. It was appropriately titled *The Strange People* and was authored by William Slavens McNutt.

It was obvious that THE ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY was far too expensive a production to be sustained at ten cents without extraordinary sales. The May 30 issue dropped from 240 to 224 pages, and the June 27 number to 208 pages. The number of pages stabilized at 192 with July 25. THE CAVALIER had run no interior illustrations, but ALL-STORY WEEKLY did. *The Lost Hearthstone*, by Perley Poore Sheehan, a three-part novel beginning in the June 27 ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY, was the first major story since the combine to appear without an illustration. By the issue of September 5 illustrations were gone altogether. THE ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY was trimming down to the point where it would be profitable as a weekly publication.

The Cavalier Legion was disbanded, with mingled emotions of sadness and pride. In the first combined issue, Bob Davis wrote a statement titled "To my comrades of the Legion" and said in part: "With this issue . . . the old Cavalier Legion, with its honorable record, its great achievements, and its royal history, takes its place among the world's great organizations and becomes a classic. The Cavalier Legion is too proud to share its glory and triumphs with another." The claim was made that there had been three hundred thousand wearers of the emblem and that the slogan "'Good fiction, good fellowship' will live forever." The following issue he offered to give Cavalier Legion buttons out to whoever asked for them as long as they lasted.

Davis in editorials before and after the amalgamation referred to it as a wedding in which THE CAVALIER was the groom and ALL-STORY WEEKLY the blushing bride, but the joining of the magazines meant separation for Thomas Newell Metcalf. The last contact Burroughs had with Metcalf was when he shipped him *The Girl from Harris'*, a short novel of forty-one thousand words, for which he was paid one thousand dollars on April 1. When he received the check, Burroughs wrote Metcalf in open astonishment, saying that he "was positive that you would not care for it," and asked why it was taken.

His surprise was understandable, because the story was about a pros-

titute who escapes from a house of ill repute, is forced to bring charges against her recent employer, and is befriended by a handsome, wealthy young man who recognizes the goodness in her and marries her. Burroughs' sentiments in the work were liberal and Christian in the truest spirit, but the writing can best be described as mid-Victorian-amateur. It almost seemed as though Burroughs was looking for an excuse to break with the ALL-STORY WEEKLY, and Bob Davis wasn't about to give him any.

Receiving no answer, Burroughs wrote on May 2, saying he had heard that Metcalf was now the editor of THE ARGOSY.

He received a reply from Metcalf on May 8, confirming that fact and also making it clear that Bob Davis was now *the* man to deal with, and that he was out of the picture.

Burroughs ignored Metcalf's statements and wrote happily that *Tarzan of the Apes* was scheduled to go into book form from A. C. McClurg, Chicago, June 17. The publication of *Tarzan of the Apes* in hardcover, far more than his magazine exposure, started Edgar Rice Burroughs on the road to fame and fortune. The book sold extremely well, and in the years since its appearance has undoubtedly become one of the best-sellers of all time.

The reviews were not bad. THE NEW YORK TIMES for July 5, 1914, complimented: "Crowded with impossibilities as the tale is, Mr. Burroughs has told it so well, and has so succeeded in carrying his readers with him, that there are few who will not look forward eagerly to the promised sequel."

Another reviewer wrote: "The writer has a convincing style worthy of a better cause." It is significant to note that when *Tarzan of the Apes* first appeared, praise was uniform for his writing ability, enough so to lay open to question the assertions of later critics that he had nothing but imagination.

Receiving no replies to his enthusiastic accounts of publishing success, Burroughs irately wrote on May 22, 1914, that he would sever all relationships with Munsey unless treated in a better fashion.

Metcalf replied May 29, again explaining that the matter was out of his hands and that he had no more influence with the magazine. The same date, Bob Davis wrote a note to Burroughs assuring him that he would answer all questions in a few days.

The last man Davis wanted to antagonize was Burroughs. With the big job of putting ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY over, he needed him more desperately than ever.

As good as his word, he wrote on June 12 that he would like to have

a conference with Burroughs in New York City with the idea of obtaining more Tarzans, lengthening *The Girl from Harris'*, and obtaining sequels to *The Mucker*, *The Mad King*, and *At the Earth's Core*.

Burroughs replied that he was thoroughly sick of writing sequels, but he supposed he was "doomed" to continue to do so and would be glad to meet with Davis.

Burroughs' round-trip fare was paid by the Frank A. Munsey Company from Chicago to New York City, where he arrived Tuesday, June 23, 1914. Burroughs was always much easier to do business with in person than by mail, and Bob Davis was the personification of affability. When Burroughs left he had agreed to do more Tarzans, lengthen *The Girl from Harris'*, and do sequels to *The Mucker*, *The Mad King*, and *At the Earth's Core*.

Shortly after Burroughs arrived home, a handwritten card from Thomas Newell Metcalf dated June 28 was received, imparting the news that he was leaving Munsey. The split, he said, had been brewing for some time. If he made a connection in which Burroughs' services might be useful, he promised to contact him immediately, and expressed his personal confidence that there would be no problems with Bob Davis.

Burroughs replied on July 8, inviting Metcalf to visit him. It is not known whether he ever did, and Metcalf's career after that date has not been determined, though he dropped into the Munsey offices to visit his old co-worker Elliot Balistier as late as 1921, according to the recollections of Seo Margulies then working for the firm's subsidiary rights division, Service For Authors.

What influence, if any, Metcalf had upon the policies of THE ARGOSY during the three or four months he edited it can only be surmised. Probably the most interesting story run during that period was *A Son of the Ages*, by Stanley Waterloo, in May, 1914. It was given to Stanley Waterloo to score a great success with a book called *The Story of A b*, "A Tale of the Time of the Cave Man," published by Way & Williams, Chicago, in 1897. It was this novel that popularized the theme of the prehistoric man in fiction, though there had been others before, and the very same year H. G. Wells would have serialized *Story of the Stone Age* in THE IDLER for May to September.

*The Story of Ab* was reprinted in a deluxe edition with color illustrations in 1905 and read by Jack London. One year later, Jack London's *Before Adam* appeared, containing episodes that were indeed very similar to those of Waterloo's. Following the appearance of the first installment of *Before Adam* in EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE in 1906, Stanley Waterloo in an interview picked up by the Associated Press protested: "Jack London

not only starts out with the same proposition I based my work on, but he employs in some instances practically the same language."

Jack London shot back an angry letter from Glen Ellen, California, on October 20, 1906, in which he excoriated Waterloo for having the temerity to intimate that the prehistoric-man theme was his exclusive property, but then in continuing rage admitted: "Why, I wrote my story as a reply to yours, because yours was unscientific. You crammed the evolution of a thousand generations into one generation—something at which I revolted from the time I first read your story."

London got involved in a running battle with several men on the situation and then finally made the cruel yet damning statement in a letter to B. W. Babcock of December 3, 1906: "Suppose, however, the plagiarism is so eminently great that it outshines the original. Who has any complaint coming?"

Jack London was frequently charged with helping himself to other people's ideas, and actually bought plots from a youthful Sinclair Lewis. The new charge helped publicize Stanley Waterloo further, and the publication of *A Son of the Ages* by THE ARGOSY, which covered the invention of "the first club, the first fire, mining of the first copper," by Scar, a man who is reincarnated many times, was a real coup for the magazine. The version published in THE ARGOSY was condensed at the request of the editor, and Waterloo died before he could mail the manuscript back, though he had finished the revision. The complete text was published in hardcover by Doubleday, Page & Co.

Because of his importance in the popularization of the prehistoric-man story, Stanley Waterloo deserves more consideration by science-fiction circles than he has up to now received. His collection, *The Wolfs Long Howl*, published by Stone in 1899, contains a number of short fantasies. *The Story of Ab* continues to be reprinted as a children's classic, but almost forgotten is *Armageddon* (Rand, McNally & Co., 18987, a novel of the building of a canal across Nicaragua and the supremacy of air power over naval vessels.

It was with the March, 1914, issue that THE ARGOSY had adopted a policy of no more serial stories. "It means a revolution in the publication of fiction magazines," Bob Davis said, "a move ahead of the times; a sudden departure from the serial method which has been followed by fiction magazines since there were fiction magazines. . . . You will enjoy a good story all in your hands at once much better than if you felt it would be six months before you reached the end."

"The Log-Book," the editor's and readers' column in THE ARGOSY, was a true indicator of reader reaction. The reader had for years received

with some expression of pleasure the Hawkins stories of an impractical inventor who contrives invention after invention that always ends him in a mishap. Stories in the series which began with *The Hawkins Horsebrake* in 1903 even showed up in the competing THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE in 1909. The years rolled along, and the number of Hawkins stories passed twenty-five in THE ARGOSY alone, and the readers' attitude became one of grumbling tolerance. All courtesy evaporated when the May, 1912, issue began a five-part *novel* titled *The Hawkins Relapse*. This time, Hawkins had invented a yacht that could ride up an island on wheels, and as usual he comes to grief, but not as much grief as the publication of the story was to bring the author.

Though Bob Davis was able to dredge up a few letters that praised the series, to print in the readers' column in the September, 1912, issue, which contained the last installment of the Edgar Franklin serial, he admitted: "I might as well say right here that Hawkins Relapse is the last story about this much-discussed amateur inventor I have in stock, and very probably the last Mr. Franklin will ever write, as he is very busy with other work. Hawkins' foes may rejoice accordingly, and his champions make the most of these final annals."

Davis was not as good as his word, for two more Hawkins short stories did appear, the last, *Hawkins-Heat*, in the July, 1915, issue. The real blame must be given to Matthew White, Jr., one of the original editors of THE ARGOSY, who took over again when Metcalf left and when Davis was occupied with the ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY. It was in "The Log-Book" for January, 1916, that Matthew White brought down the curtain on the series in reply to a reader's blast by stating: "I wish to inform the correspondent whose letter appears below that there will be no more Hawkins stories."

"The Log-Book" showed that it was the dislike for the Hawkins series that resulted in the sharp cutdown in science fiction in THE ARGOSY. "I find that there is a greater division of opinion on fantastic stories than in respect to anything else we serve in THE ARGOSY table of contents," Davis said in the April, 1913, THE ARGOSY. "If a reader doesn't like one 'impossible' story, as they have come to be called, he is very apt not to care for any of them. And the reverse is just as true. That is to say, if he likes one of the brand, he will be very much inclined to like them all. Note in the following letter from Guy Z. F., Washington, Indiana, the leaning toward *Hawkins*, whose deeds certainly border on the fantastic." He then followed the letter with another, which he prefaced with the statement: "Here, you see, the boot is on the other leg. R. G. C., of Provo, Utah, doesn't care for the fantastic, hence he knocks *Hawkins* and boosts Terhune, whose specialty is history." The foregoing slalemenls



seem to leave little doubt that ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY was the repository of an inordinate amount of fantasy as a deliberate policy to attract that portion of the readership who liked them, and THE ARGOSY ran much fewer to satisfy the audience that preferred more conventional fiction.

## 11. H. P. LOVECRAFT AND THE MUNSEY MAGAZINES

IT WAS the readers' departments of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY that produced one of the most fascinating sidelights on the literary history of Munsey. H. P. Lovecraft has in recent times won a deserved reputation as one of the great masters of horror and science fiction in American letters. His works, admired by a small but select coterie of devotees, which included August W. Derleth, Donald Wandrei, Frank Belknap Long, Henry Kuttner, Robert Bloch, and innumerable others, has today reached the stage where they are perpetually in print, motion pictures are made from them, and even former detractors come forth with more positive reappraisals.

As prominent a literary commentator as Colin Wilson has become so utterly obsessed by what he has found in Lovecraft's writings that he led off his book *The Strength to Dream* (Houghton Mifflin, 1962) with a discussion of that author. He did not end there, for in continuing his discussions of W. B. Yeats, Oscar Wilde, August Strindberg, Emile Zola, Nathanael West, William Faulkner, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Jean-Paul Sartre, and many others, he evaluated their thinking, methods, and ideas against those of H. P. Lovecraft.

H. P. Lovecraft had been a regular reader of THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE from its very first issue, January, 1905. Since he was born August 20, 1890, he was fourteen years old at the time he first discovered it. The issue in which THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE became ALL-STORY WEEKLY, dated March 7, 1914, carried a letter two thousand words long which is an important and revealing document on the reading background and preferences of an H. P. Lovecraft now twenty-three years of age and a faithful reader of the Munsey pulps for nine continuous years. He said in part: "Having read every number of your magazine since its beginning in January, 1905, I feel in some measure privileged to write a few words of approbation and criticism concerning its contents.

"In the present age of vulgar taste and sordid realism it is a relief to peruse a publication such as THE ALL-STORY, which has ever been and still remains under the influence of the imaginative school of Poe and Verne.

"For such materialistic readers as your North-British correspondent,

Mr. G. W. P., of Dundee, there are only too many periodicals containing 'probable' stories; let THE ALL-STORY continue to hold its unique position as purveyor of literature to those whose minds cannot be confined within the narrow circle of probability, or dulled into a positive acceptance of the tedious round of things as they are.

"If, in fact, man is unable to create living beings out of inorganic matter, to hypnotize the beasts of the forests to do his will, to swing from tree to tree with the apes of the African jungle, to restore to life the mummified corpses of the Pharaohs and the Incas, or to explore the atmosphere of Venus and the deserts of Mars, permit us, at least, in fancy, to witness these miracles, and to satisfy that craving for the unknown, the weird, and the impossible which exists in every active human brain.

". . . He who can retain in his older years the untainted mind, the lively imagination, and the artless curiosity of his infancy is rather blessed than cursed; such men as these are our authors, scientists, and inventors.

"At or near the head of your list of writers Edgar Rice Burroughs undoubtedly stands. I have read very few recent novels by others wherein is displayed an equal ingenuity in plot, and verisimilitude in treatment. His only fault seems to be a tendency toward scientific inaccuracy and slight inconsistencies. . . .

"In the domain of the weird and bizarre, Lee Robinet has furnished us a masterpiece by writing *The Second Man*. The atmosphere created and sustained throughout the story can be the work only of a gifted and polished artist. Very effective is the author's careful neglect to tell the exact location of his second Eden.

"I strongly hope that you have added Perley Poore Sheehan permanently to your staff, for in him may be recognized an extremely powerful writer. I have seen Mr. Sheehan's work elsewhere, and was especially captivated by a grim short story of his entitled *His Ancestor's Head*.

"I hardly need mention the author of *A Columbus of Space* further than to say that I have read every published work of Garrett P. Serviss, own most of them, and await his further writings with eagerness. . . ."

Another important letter of one thousand words in length from H. P. Lovecraft was published in ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY for August 15, 1914, commenting upon the combination of the two publications.

"Many writers, familiar and unfamiliar, good and bad, come from THE CAVALIER to the readers of THE ALL-STORY. Out of these I trust the best will be permanently retained, and the others gradually eliminated.

"The greatest benefit derived from the amalgamation undoubtedly will be the return to THE ALL-STORY of George Allan England, who, to my mind, ranks with Edgar Rice Burroughs and Albert Payson Terhune as

one of the three supreme literary artists of the house of Munsey. Mr. England's *Darkness and Dawn* trilogy is on a par with the Tarzan stories, and fortunate indeed is that magazine which can secure as contributors the authors of both.

"Other CAVALIER authors of extreme merit are Zane Grey, whose novels of the West have such a fund of graphic local color; and Edgar Franklin, whose stories, both serious and humorous, have so long entertained the readers of the Munsey magazines. . . .

"I now approach a subject which fills me with trepidation.

"Ever since last August I have been engaged in a wordy warfare with some of the readers of THE ARGOSY concerning an alleged author whose erotic, effeminate stories fill me with the most profound disgust. This author was one of the principal contributors to THE CAVALIER; in fact, his tales formed the reason for my ceasing to read the latter periodical. Now he is to be inflicted upon the readers of THE ALL-STORY. For my somewhat severe criticism of this writer, I have received every imaginable sort of ridicule and opposition, both in prose and in verse, through THE ARGOSY 'Log-Book.'

"In order to avoid another such affray in case this letter should be printed, I will here do no more than to quote and uphold the words of our anonymous correspondent, 'One Who Reads Between Lines,' whose letter appears in THE ALL-STORY for May 16. He says, and I say with him, 'Tell Fred Jackson to can all of his heroines and then send the can to the government to be tested as an explosive. . . .'

The September, 1913, issue of THE ARGOSY had printed a communication from H. P. Lovecraft expressing at some length, with impressive rhetorical vehemence, his contempt for Fred Jackson and the type of story he wrote, and requesting his extirpation from the pages of an otherwise noble fiction magazine. The letter kicked off so elaborate and prolonged a debate in the readers' columns of three Munsey magazines as to the abilities or lack thereof of Fred Jackson as to make Lovecraft's name better known than most of the authors'.

Fred Jackson's frequency of appearance in THE CAVALIER and THE ARGOSY resulted from the fact that his specialty was writing love stories. He wrote them awkwardly, with jolting bluntness, and they could prove sickening to anyone who doted on adventure, but they were clean, with a good story line which sometimes took complex twists that rescued them from sameness. He could write a sound adventure story, too, and had written at least one science-fiction novelette based on the Pygmalion theme, *Galatea the Second*, in THE CAVALIER for October 5, 1912, in which a statue of a beautiful young woman apparently comes to life and has to be (aught to eat, speak, dress, and perform the most ordinary

actions. She turns out to have been the victim of a scientist's experiment with a drug that turns humans almost as hard as stone for three days and then they recover with all memory expunged. This particular story is handled with great technical writing skill, and while it is also a love story, is far superior to most of Jackson's other work. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that he wrote his novels in great haste (three full-length novels by him appeared in eight months in *THE ARGOSY*) that dissipated a good natural writing talent.

Lovecraft's reaction to Jackson was to some extent prompted by an extremely prudish upbringing, but also quite legitimately by the annoyance of a fan of strange adventure who was being offered an excessive quantity of conventional love stories. His wrath particularly centered upon the novel *The First Law*, which appeared complete in the April, 1913, *THE ARGOSY*, a story of a young opera singer who loses her voice after completing a smashing success and who considers marrying a man she doesn't love because her family needs the money, though she is in love with someone else, but is rescued from that fate when he falls in love with and marries her sister, who is his secretary, so his money will still be available to prop up the fading family fortunes.

Letters poured in defending Fred Jackson. The December, 1913, issue had letter headings which read: "Challenge to Lovecraft," "Virginia vs. Providence," "Elmira vs. Providence," "Bomb for Lovecraft."

Miss E. E. Blankenship wrote from Richmond, Virginia: "I think you are very ungenerous in your attitude, Mr. Lovecraft. Your words 'erratic fiction' [she misquoted "erotic"] I fail to acknowledge. Instead I find pages filled with innocence, sweetness, loveliness, and fascination."

Elizabeth E. Loop of Elmira, New York, jumped on Lovecraft's extensive vocabulary: "If he would use a few less adjectives and more words which the general public are more familiar with than 'labyrinthine,' 'laureled,' 'luminary,' 'lucubration,' and many others . . . I am an admirer of Mr. Jackson's stories, but this letter of Mr. Lovecraft's filled me with a distaste for our friend from Providence."

However, there were two letter headings which blared: "Agrees with Lovecraft."

From Paris, France, A. Missbaum wrote: "Will you go on reading if I start by saying that I entirely agree—I speak in behalf of many of your readers on this side of the pond—with H. P. Lovecraft, who wrote an arraignment which you printed in September's issue? Yes, Fred Jackson is rotten. Give us less love stories (unless they are live ones) and more scientific mystery tales."

A Los Angeles reader protested "three out of the last live novels" by Jackson and sided with Lovecraft.

H. P. Lovecraft read the fusillades and responded in the January, 1914, THE ARGOSY in verse, which Bob Davis titled "Lovecraft Comes Back Ad Criticos," and which in part read:

What vig'rous protests now assail my eyes?  
 See Jackson's satellites in anger rise!  
 His ardent readers, steep'd in tales of love  
 Sincere devotion to their leader prove;  
 In brave defense of sickly gallantry,  
 They damn the critic and beleaguer me.

Then, closing:

Tis plain you please the fallen public ear.  
 As once, in Charles the Second's vulgar age,  
 Gross Wycherly and Dryden soil'd the stage,  
 So now again erotic themes prevail,  
 However loud and sterner souls bewail.  
 Pure fiction wanes and baser writings rise—  
 But cease, my Muse! No more I'll criticize.

As the readers' battle continued, the February, 1914, THE ARGOSY found the readers' columns leading off with still another Lovecraft poetical retort, this time titled "Ad Criticos: Liber Secundus."

Still louder bawl the bold Boeotian band,  
 And seize their arms at sentiment's command:  
 The lovers' legion, martially array'd,  
 To tender Jack bears its eager aid.  
 Their acid quills, fresh pluck'd from Cupid's wing,  
 At me the Myrmidons of Venus fling.

F. V. Bennett, of Hanover, Illinois, who had sided with Lovecraft, renewed his subscription and commented: "I see by 'The Log-Book' that H. P. Lovecraft is getting his now; well, shake, H.P.L. We got it first; don't care, as we started the ball that called a halt to the rush of Jackson soft stuff; keep the good work up and give them as good as they send, man."

To which Bob Davis replied: "I can promise that you won't get too much Jackson in 1914, if you will overlook the story this month—*Winged Feet*."

Davis' statement satisfied neither the critics nor the defenders; thousands of word pro and con continued to run each month. Sometimes there were three or four *poems* an issue aimed at Lovecraft; his use of verse was widely imitated. The greatest bard arrayed against him was John Russell, of Tampa, Florida, a sampling of his technique from the May, 1914, issue going like this:

Lovecraft has dropped from rime to prose,  
To Shew that what he knew, he knows.  
I say that really to my view  
'Twas little that he ever knew.

The intensity of the debate reached the point where in the October, 1914, issue, more than a year after Lovecraft's first letter, *an entire section*, with twenty-four-point boldface type across the page, was titled "Fred Jackson, Pro and Con." Explaining it, the editor said: "Fred Jackson, the most liked and hated writer that ever contributed to THE ARGOSY! Never mind, Fred; the fact that no one is indifferent to you is encouraging. It shows that you aren't mediocre or meaningless, anyway. Wishy-washy people don't make folks mad. We'll still keep on printing a story by you now and then, even at the risk of crabbing our stand-in with a section of ARGOSY readers."

The page led off with two columns, one headed "Jackson Boosters" and the other "Jackson Knockers," with two poems, one by John Russell and one by H. P. Lovecraft, the latter promising to quit the fray and stop taking up so much room in "The Log-Book," but also with a letter from F. V. Bennett ending with the crack: "As for John Russell's poetry, it's—well, in the same class with Jackson."

"Fred Jackson's Coming Back," a full-page headline heralded in the December, 1914, issue, with a brace of letters which asked for it. The idea of devoting special sections to authors had proved so well received that the same issue had two pages titled "What They Think of E. J. Rath." Rath, the pen name of a woman, who would go on to great success, had scored a tremendous popular hit with readers of THE ARGOSY with *The Man with the 44 Chest* in October. There had been a special section on Zane Grey in November, and a number of sections on pros and cons on THE ARGOSY itself.

The Jackson debate was to continue for years, and a complete reprint of the material by Lovecraft and the people who referred to him by name would make a worthwhile small booklet in a limited edition, aimed at special collectors. There is a possibility that the quantity of criticism he received may have been the reason why his letter in ARGOSY WEEKLY for November 15, 1919, appeared under the pen name of Augustus T. Swift. He asked for story endings "without the hugging and kissing," and added, "There is such a thing as being fed up too full with the love business."

His main reason for writing was to praise Francis Stevens, an outstanding writer of fantasy. *"Citadel of Fear*, if written by Sir Walter Scott or Ibanez, that wonderful and tragic allegory would have been praised to the skies. . . . After the profound intellectual and moral impression

created by the *Citadel of Fear*, it is hardly necessary to say that I plunged into *Avalon* with equal eagerness. I see by the first installment that I am not to be disappointed, for the same masterful evidence of huge mystery, gigantic tragedy, and original and extraordinary situations are immediately shown."

Francis Stevens was still a major object of his affections in another letter written as Augustus T. Swift in ARGOSY WEEKLY for May 22, 1920: "I note with joy that your one thousandth issue of March 6 is to celebrate by printing the first installment of *Claimed*, by Francis Stevens. . . . Mr. Stevens, to my mind, is the highest grade of your writers. . . . In other words, he realizes that psychology plays the most important part in life's comedy, tragedy, and romance, and that revolvers, daggers, and rifles are no longer exclusively popular as tokens of affection or otherwise between gentlemen and gentlewomen of honor."

There is no reason to believe that Lovecraft stopped reading ARGOSY WEEKLY in 1920, and we know beyond a doubt that he read it continuously from 1905 to 1920, when he was thirty years old, and that his enthusiasm for its authors and their works was unabated. Since H. P. Lovecraft, after the writing of *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, which first appeared in THE RECLUSE in 1927, gained considerable respect as a critic of fantastic and supernatural fiction, his views on the Munsey pulps must be regarded seriously. Practically nothing of the material, styles, or attitudes of the writers of the Munsey pulps, even those he praised most highly, is observable in his work—underscoring, perhaps, that the writers who are most pleasing to a budding author are not necessarily the most important influences on their writings.

## 12. THE PULPS WOO WOMEN READERS

IT WOULD BE easy to pass over the H. P. Lovecraft-Fred Jackson episode as a meaningless tempest in a teapot, stirred up by blind chance. From the vantage of historical perspective it proved considerably more significant than that. It uncovered a sharp difference in the readership, with cleavage much deeper than had been suspected.

THE ARGOSY deliberately appealed to a masculine audience with most of its material, but also slanted a substantial portion toward women to secure a broader base of readership. In the process they had watered down the adventure and conventionalized the love stories.

The excitement in "The Log-Book" which often prompted headings like "Our Readers Cheer and Groan" or "How Do *You* Like THE ARGOSY?" was a symptom of a troubled readership and not the calculation of editorial objectivity or cleverness. The major complaints were repeated

over and over again, so there was no wishing them away. There was almost universal agreement that virtually all of the short stories were terrible. The idea of a complete novel was good, but when the reader didn't like it, the issue was spoiled for him. A novel by Fred Jackson seemed to arouse protests from a quarter of the readers. Letter after letter said they liked THE ARGOSY of the early years of the century much better. The lack of fantastic stories was a frequent complaint.

THE ARGOSY had been running 240 pages for fifteen cents. They quietly dropped the number of pages to 224 at no decrease in price in the issue of January, 1915, an indication of circulation decline. Then, abruptly, with the October, 1915, issue, the price dropped to ten cents, the pages to 192, but with smaller type to maintain the wordage, and serials were resumed. A four-page blue insert in that issue from Frank A. Munsey rationalized the return, but his flip-flops of logic were now greeted cynically.

Suddenly serial novels were good things again, not anachronisms for monthlies, as had been authoritatively proclaimed, and the times had not passed them by. Ironically, the first serial was by the controversial Fred Jackson, titled *The Diamond Necklace* (October-December, 1915), but it was a murder mystery and not a love story. There was a return to fantasy, though only temporarily, eight stories published that year and two of them important.

*The Abyss of Wonders* by Perley Poore Sheehan, a complete novel in the January, 1915, issue, was perhaps his best work of science fiction. An "island" is found in the Gobi Desert (that once was a sea) inhabited by two thousand people, remnants of a once great civilization, lost in antiquity. They have an idyllic community, with weather control. Small hair-covered slaves that come and go like wraiths, subject to the superior wills of the people of the "island," wait on them hand and foot. Ennui has reduced the population, until extinction will shortly face them (though the average life span is one hundred years) and their ancient knowledge will be lost to the world. A priest uses a heat ray to prevent an exodus; the island is destroyed and the slaves scattered to the desert. The American, Russian, and Chinese who have penetrated the sanctuary leave with three women, but the women all die from the ordeal of making their way back to modern civilization.

The tribulations of travel on the way to the "island" have never been told better or with greater drama, and that is a great deal to say, considering the vast library of fine desert stories. The personality of a camel, oddly enough, becomes the finest characterization of a thrilling novel, which was reprinted in a limited boxed edition of fifteen hundred copies by Polaris Press, Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1953.



Of highly unusual interest was *The Moon Maiden*, by Garrett P. Serviss, in the May, 1915, issue. It would be the last science fiction by him that would ever appear, and one that raised a number of questions. Paid for on July 14, 1913, it was held for almost two years before publication, despite the fact that the one thousand dollars Serviss received for the seventy-thousand-word story was the most he had ever been paid.

In no previous novel had romance played anything but a very minor role, but *The Moon Maiden* is first, last, and entirely a love story, and one in which the dialogue can best be described as American Victorian, and a triangle that was new only when Lilith momentarily seemed to offer competition to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Antinous Altair Smith, an astronomer, is reporting on the findings of special color lenses he has perfected, which permit him to see life on the moon, before a congress of astronomers at the Harvard Observatory. Carelessness of a colleague destroys his lenses before he can give an exhibition. An apparition of a superbly beautiful woman appears before the assembly, says she is from the moon, and then disappears.

She reappears briefly several times at later dates for Antinous Smith, and then after three days alone in a room, through alien science, rearranges her structure into that of a beautiful woman. She is in love with Antinous and has observed him from the moon, where she is queen. At great personal sacrifice, she has permanently cast herself into human guise and wishes to use her superior knowledge to guide Smith to greatness.

Ethel Goodenough, the daughter of a great astronomer, Professor Goodenough, is in love with Smith, and she is a brilliant scientist in her own right, having duplicated his color lenses. A great struggle for Smith's affections ensues between the two women, and Miss Goodenough is threatened by a demonlike entity which has accompanied the Moon Maid to Earth.

Losing control of the entity, the Moon Maid is killed by it in trying to protect Ethel Goodenough. The "demon" is destroyed by a fusillade of .45 slugs. Despite the inferior writing, the blatant sentimentality, and the too obvious allegorical symbols represented by the characters, the novel surmounts all to build in suspense and end on a note of considerable power.

This is the strangest, most atypical and mystical of all Serviss' work. It is difficult to believe that it could have been written after *The Second Deluge*. Antinous Smith is obviously a transposition of a youthful Garrett Serviss. One is led to suggest that it was an early unsold work, and what lends additional credence to this supposition is that the story carried under Serviss' name, "Author of *The Conquest of Mars*, *The Moon Metal*, *A Columbus of Space*, *The Second Deluge*, etc." All but the first

had been published by Munsey magazines. That listing was to drive science-fiction fans to despair for thirty years, searching for a Serviss story titled *The Conquest of Mars*, to eventually find that it had appeared in early 1898, syndicated in newspapers as a sequel to H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, under the title *Edison's Conquest of Mars*.

Probably in early submissions of *The Moon Maiden*, Serviss had added "by author of *The Conquest of Mars*" (conceivably its original title), and it was from that source that THE ARGOSY editor preparing the opening page secured it.

Other leading action pulp magazines were suffering from the same schizophrenic problem as THE ARGOSY. They were desperately seeking a formula that would appeal to both men and women and provide the broadest possible audience, and the result was frequently ludicrous.

ADVENTURE, by 1915, was a potent competitor to THE ARGOSY. It offered 224 pages of adventure fiction for fifteen cents on a monthly basis, and most of it was real he-man stuff. There were the vigorous and mystical novels and novelettes of Talbot Mundy, usually in exotic, far-off settings; the effectively done mysteries of Richard Marsh; Edgar Wallace was a contributor; and Octavus Roy Cohen was writing sports stories. Outstanding interpreters of the Old West—William MacLeod Raine, W. C. Tuttle, and Raymond S. Spears—were building their reputations; and Stephen Chalmers, J. Allan Dunn, Gordon McCreagh, Arthur D. Howden Smith, J. U. Giesy, and Samuel Alexander White were regular contributors.

"The Camp Fire," a department subtitled "A Meeting Place for Readers, Writers, and Adventurers," was probably superior to that offered by the Munsey magazines, and it was in that department in November, 1914, that endorsements from Theodore Roosevelt and Major General Leonard Wood for the formation of the American Legion appeared.

ADVENTURE ran few fantasies, but *The Crimson Chamber*, a complete novel by J. I. Cochrane, M.D., about a character named Dan Wheeler who has the entire underworld at his command and used it to save New York City from destruction, in the June, 1915, ADVENTURE, might have qualified. That novel could also have served as a prototype for the character magazines such as THE SPIDER, THE SECRET SIX, THE AVENGER, and others that came later.

One of the better lost-race stories published by ADVENTURE was *The Story of William Hyde*, by Patrick and Terence Casey, in the issues, December, 1915-March, 1916. William Hyde, the narrator, tells of his discovery of a "lost race" in Borneo who are the descendants of an army of Tartars sent there by Genghis Khan to conquer the land. Hyde resembles the ancient Khan, so he is accepted, and marries, but is finally

driven out, partially through the vindictiveness of a jealous queen who also loves him. Extravagantly promoted as "One of the Greatest Romantic Stories Ever Written," *The Story of William Hyde* rates fourth among all stories published in 1916 by a vote of the readers, but the editor confessed that its publication received some of the most vigorous protests in the history of the magazine. This acted to tighten still further ADVENTURE'S restriction on fantasy.

Despite all of the masculinity described previously, starting with its May, 1915, issue ADVENTURE features on every cover the slogan: "Stories of life, love, and adventure." No action scenes at all appeared; instead, each cover featured pastels of beautiful women's hair-dos, a girl with a parrot, a girl with a mink stole, a girl with a snowball, or, if it were a summer issue, a girl with a fan, a girl with an umbrella, a girl walking a dog, or a girl with a fur hood.

The entire arrangement was a fraud. The woman seduced by the covers was hard-pressed to find any love stories at all in the pages of ADVENTURE. With only a few exceptions, Arthur Sullivan Hoffman bought and published fiction as though he had never noticed what was promised so explicitly on the covers.

In early 1917, the word "love" and the pictures of women were dropped, the pages fell to 192, and the publication pretended to be nothing but what it actually was—a rousing magazine for red-blooded men. The circulation increased at such tremendous rate that ADVENTURE began twice a month in mid-September, 1917, issue and for the next ten years was one of the ranking successes in magazine publishing.

Among the factors that helped circulation was the serialization of *Finished*, by H. Rider Haggard, a five-part novel of the fight of the African Zulu nation against the British, which began in the April, 1917, issue. During 1918 the price was raised to twenty cents, with no increase in content, and it did not appear to affect readership at all.

THE BLUE BOOK, ever since its inception, had followed the same ambiguous policy discarded by ADVENTURE. It featured on its cover every issue the face of a woman, usually resembling some celebrity of the stage or screen. Under the pressure of competition, it increased its pages from 224 to 240 for fifteen cents with the October, 1914, number. In order to do this, it eliminated a section of photos of stage and moving-picture stars (predominantly women), plus scenes from the productions, which had been printed on coated stock. These were transferred to a companion magazine, THE GREEN BOOK

THE BLUE BOOK carried no interior illustrations at first, but then very small designs began to appear within the title of each story beginning in 1915. Its roster of authors was most impressive, including James Oliver

Curword, James Francis Dwyer, Albert Payson Terhune, Harris Merton Lyon, Victor Rousseau, Octavus Roy Cohen, Clarence Herbert New, William Wallace Cook, Edgar Jepson, Albert Dorrington, Ellis Parker Butler, George Allan England, Edwin Balmer, and William B. Marcharg and Gaston Leroux.

Its answer to ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY'S Edgar Rice Burroughs was H. Rider Haggard, whose novel *The Ivory Child* was stretched out through eight monthly installments, beginning in February, 1915. It features Allan Quartermain, older and broke, but still game to set out on a hunt through the upper Nile for the kidnapped wife of Lord Ragnell, in a fast-moving adventure incorporating elements of superstition and mysticism.

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE was still doing well at twice a month in 1915, offering 224 pages for fifteen cents, plus a readers' section and superb covers. It was more a middle-of-the-road *family* adventure magazine and did not as blatantly appeal to women as did its competition. A very large percentage of its contents was written by second-raters and was literary pabulum, though blended with it were contributions from Sax Rohmer, Albert Payson Terhune, Henry Herbert Knibbs, H. Devere Stacpoole, Peter B. Kyne, and William Hope Hodgson.

The quality of science fiction published by THE POPULAR MAGAZINE was not great. *The Inert Atom*, by Francis Lynde, a complete novel in the issue for April 23, 1915, was of interest for its predictions of the utilization of atomic energy and a schism between the United States and Japan.

*The Forgotten Land*, by Henry Herbert Knibbs, a short story of only eight pages in the February 7, 1917, issue, is a minor masterpiece. After invasion and conquest by the Japanese, the United States is slowly repopulated by the Indians. The story deals with the meeting and life of the last white man and woman with memorable effectiveness. Edgar Rice Burroughs, an admirer of Knibbs, had borrowed some of his poetry for use in *The Mucker*. There is a belief in some quarters that Knibbs, who was primarily a western-story writer, had been assisted in this story by Burroughs as a return favor. It is so off-trail for Knibbs and so characteristic of Burroughs in plot that, true or not, it is easy to believe.

With the issue in which that story appeared, THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, which had dropped to 208 pages in the fall of 1916, raised its price to twenty cents and restored the missing pages. It also all but eliminated the pictorial cover, indicating sales problems.

Street & Smith's PEOPLE'S, "Stories That Stir," gave every indication of strengthening while THE POPULAR MAGAZINE waned. Through 1914, 1915, and 1916 it offered 224 pages for fifteen cents, with its biggest

attraction the popular Jimmy Dale stories of Frank L. Packard, of a criminal blackmailed and intimidated by a girl and forced to use his safecracking and other talents for constructive purposes.

A banner science-fiction exposition of the era was its novel of the invasion of the United States by Japan titled *The Peril of the Pacific*, written by J. Allan Dunn, with an impressive cover by John A. Coughlin showing San Francisco skyscrapers toppling before Nipponese bombs. The magazine dropped to 208 pages in 1917, probably as a result of a paper shortage created by World War I.

PEOPLE'S gained by absorbing ALL AROUND MAGAZINE into its April, 1917, number. ALL AROUND MAGAZINE, a changed title from the old NEW STORY MAGAZINE, had carried more fantasy in its last years than most of the other Street & Smith pulps. PEOPLE'S inherited the Semi-Dual stories from ALL AROUND MAGAZINE'S backlog and published *The Compass in the Sky* by J. U. Giesy and Junius B. Smith as the cover story for their May, 1917, issue. It was the first of many in that series.

PEOPLE'S was, in many ways, a more attractive magazine for adventure lovers than its companion THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. Its covers by P. J. Monahan, Modest Stein, and John A. Coughlin, conveyed an atmosphere of exotic mystery that had undeniable appeal. The magazine carried interior illustrations and had a very personalized editorial department. Its authors were excellent professionals, including H. Bedford Jones, J. Allan Dunn, Frank L. Packer, J. E. Grinstead, Harold Lamb, Achmed Abdullah, Perley Poore Sheehan, George Allan England, and William Merriam Rouse.

The foregoing positive factors, coupled with the rise in price to twenty cents of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, which probably caused a shift of readership, found the circulation climbing. In its September, 1917, issue PEOPLE'S announced it would increase its publication schedule to semi-monthly, beginning with the August 10, 1917, issue. The dates given are precisely accurate, and PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE (its new title with that issue) must certainly be one of only a very few professional magazines in the history of publishing to have announced an August number immediately following September!

Science fiction and fantasy did appear in PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE, but the editor, Eugene Clancy, was so adroit at outwardly disguising it that a complete reading of every story was required to identify it. Undoubtedly, the most important single work of science fiction to run in the entire history of the magazine was a seven-part novel by George Allan England, *The Nebula of Death* (February 10-May 10, 1918). It was England's intent to show the importance to life on this planet of the chlorophyll manufactured by plants from the sun's rays, and the effect of the earth's passing through a nebula that prevents the creation of this vital chemical is the basis

of the story. Immediately following its publication, the editor claimed it was the most popular single story in the magazine since it began publication.

PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE appeared to be doing well until it raised its price to twenty cents with the August 25, 1918, issue. To add insult to injury, it cut the number of pages back to 192 with the October 10, 1918, number. With its issue dated September, 1919, it went to letter-size on coated stock and began running illustrated "significant" articles along with the fiction, and temporarily left pulp competition.

### 13. THE CHALLENGE OF THE DETECTIVE PULPS

BY FAR the most significant development and the one most far-reaching in its example was the publication of the first all-crime magazine in history, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, launched by Street & Smith as a semimonthly with the issue of October 5, 1915. Covers were by John A. Coughlin, there were 128 pages, and the price was ten cents. While not the first of the specialized fiction magazines, being preceded by THE OCEAN and THE RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, it accomplished what they had not by creating a trend that would result in the proliferation of the pulps into western, love, air, science fiction, and supernatural, as well as detective.

An unusual fact about the *first* issue was that it featured the *second* installment of a four-part serial by and about Nick Carter, titled *The Yellow Label*. DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, like the earlier TOP-NOTCH, was another step in the transition from the dime novels to the pulps. The first installment of the serial had run in NICK CARTER WEEKLY, Number 819, the last issue of that series. The first DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE carried a story by Scott Campbell, a pen name for Frederick W. Davis, who was then writing the Nick Carter stories. The magazine boasted "Nick Carter" as its editor, but the actual editor was Frank E. Blackwell, a staff member of Street & Smith.

Most of the other authors in the first issue were unknown but one, R. Norman Grisewood, had written a curious interplanetary novel *Zarlah, the Martian*, published in 1909 by R. F. Fenno & Co., Chicago, that told of an earthman and Martian who exchange bodies to explore each other's worlds, and the romance that is the result of the experiment.

If any readers of THE ARGOSY happened to buy the November 5 DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, they would have found the first story in a new series of the much-maligned Fred Jackson, but these were all legitimate detective stories.

Detective and mystery stories had been one of the mainstays of (lie all-fiction pulp magazines. The publication of DETECTIVE STORY MAGA-

ZINE meant that a reader whose primary interest was mysteries need not buy a general magazine for a meager ration, nor endure love stories as a compromise to get it. Less than two years later, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE would have a semimonthly competitor titled MYSTERY MAGAZINE (November 15, 1917), which carried over many dime-novel authors as contributors and was edited by the author of the famous Frank Reade and Jack Wright "invention" stories, Luis P. Senarens.

A major part of ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY'S fiction fare was off-trail mystery and detective tales that involved elements of the fantastic. The Semi-Dual series was a regular feature, but in addition, the author of Fu Manchu, Sax Rohmer, introduced his unusual detective, Morris Klaw, who solves the most bizarre crimes by sleeping in the rooms in which they were committed. Four of these short stories were published during February and March, 1915. Equally unusual was Maurice Drake's *Austin Voogdt, Sherlock of the Sea*, February 27 to April 3, 1915, a six-part novel about a sea-faring sleuth. From the French of Paul d'Avoi, Florence Crew-Jones translated *The Laughing Death* (March 27-April 17, 1915), which was run in four parts, a novel of international spies involving greatly advanced dirigibles and unusual methods of murder. Paul d'Avoi was the pen name of Paul Erie, a ranking French science-fiction author whose series of *Voyages Excentriques*, comprising a score of volumes, each with a hundred or more illustrations and six pounds in weight apiece, made his works the showcase for science fiction in France. A series inherited from the old THE CAVALIER was the adventures of the Honeymoon Detectives, a man-and-wife team, the creation of Arnold Fredericks. *The Telltale Mirror*, by Helen E. Haskill, was an unusual detective novel which employed the device of using a liquid which will disclose people's feelings. Richard Marsh, renowned for his novel of ancient supernatural influence, *The Beetle* (1897), introduced a unique female detective in *The Adventures of Judith Lee, Lip Reader*.

Mystery and detective stories were also an important part of the editorial balance of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, ADVENTURE, THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, PEOPLE'S, NEW STORY MAGAZINE, and other direct competitors of ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY. The appearance of specialized publications in the genre was inevitably to cost them a certain percentage of the readership that bought them primarily for mystery fiction, and force them to place greater importance on other types of stories to sustain the old and attract additional readership.

The challenge of turning THE ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY into a commercial success was a formidable one. If for no other reason than because of its frequency of publication, it was technically the leading pulp magazine. The grinding job of providing consistently a type of

fiction that would sustain a high level of weekly readership was acknowledged by Bob Davis in "Heart to Heart Talks" in the June 20, 1914, issue. "Not only do our readers, but most of our rival editors wonder how we manage to keep up such a regular flow of good fiction, hold our old favorites, and make room for new writers," he said. "Persistency is at the bottom of it. There is nothing else on my mind except THE ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY. That is all I think about, dream about, and talk about."

Davis had bought the first pulp story of Albert Payson Terhune, a sixty-thousand-worder, for one hundred and twenty-five dollars, titled *The Secret of the Blue House*, a tale of love and mystery, for THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, where it appeared in four installments, April-July, 1905. Terhune later referred to the magazine and its mentor as "a soft paper periodical with a hardboiled editor." It would be 1919 before Terhune would achieve fame with *Lad: A Dog*, but his name ranked high with the readers of the Munsey magazines. Between 1906 and 1916, Terhune's income from pulp-magazine writing fluctuated from a low of twelve thousand dollars to a high of thirty thousand dollars, including his eighty-dollar-a-week salary on the staff of THE NEW YORK WORLD. Among the "big" stories that Davis used to help put over ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY was a four-part novel titled "*Dad*," by Albert Payson Terhune, which ran July 4-25, 1914. The story, about a drunken veteran of the Mexican War, who teams up with his son to become a hero of the Civil War, was of special interest, since it was plotted by Sinclair Lewis, who also wrote two of its chapters and in exchange received twenty-five percent of the check. Terhune's major contribution to fantasy was the novelization of the play *The Return of Peter Grimm* (Dodd, Mead), a ghost story based on an idea by Cecil B. DeMille and published under the by-line of David Belasco in 1912.

The readers had no way of knowing that they were reading the words of a budding genius ghosting a Terhune story, so there was no positive reaction. The regulars found the quantities of science fiction thinning out and resented it. A novel by Stephen Chalmers, *The Frozen Beauty* (June 20-July 4), telling of a girl in suspended animation and a semi-human ape involved in the proceedings, underscored a lack of originality that was typical of most other science fiction of the time.

One answer Davis had to the growing discontent was to explode *The Mucker* by Edgar Rice Burroughs on his readers the four issues October 24-November 14, 1914, after it had been revised and resubmitted on September 9, 1914. Even more important, in the issue which concluded *The Mucker*, he finally opened a major science-fiction novel by George Allan England, *The Empire in the Air*, with the title changed



from *The Love Wrecker*. The seventy-four-thousand-word novel was written, delivered, and paid for in segments, beginning with a hundred dollars on June 18, 1913, and concluding with the sixth and final payment on March 18, 1914, of five hundred dollars, all payments adding up to nine-hundred and fifty dollars.

The cover was one of the most effective the magazine had ever run for science fiction, showing a fluorescent globe hovering in the air, pseudopods with eyes on their ends wriggling from it. At last Davis had placed stories by the two greatest writers of the scientific romance in a single issue, but neither was completely representative. *The Mucker*, though an action story, was primarily a study of character. *The Empire in the Air* was a super-science epic, fifteen years ahead of its time, whose importance has since been ignored because it never was reprinted.

George Allan England's extraordinary novel told of the use of a space warp which projected globelike creatures from one hundred thousand light-years away to earth through the fourth dimension. They have no more regard for human life, despite their intelligence, than man has for the insects. They dissolve solid worlds into a gaseous state from which they can absorb nutrient, then move on to other worlds to repeat the process. They are nomads of space. Boston is destroyed, and the world is in chaos, when a scientist rises in a high-altitude plane, projects five men into the fourth dimension, and utilizes the polarized dust from the 1883 explosion of the volcano of Krakatau, which is still suspended in great quantities in the upper atmosphere, to destroy the invaders through the release of negative electricity.

The story ends as one of the glowing green globes enters the room of the scientist who has defeated them and leaves a message on a sheet of paper, stating: "You have conquered. All but a few of us are lost. Those few are returning beyond the Galactic Ring. Your little planet and you strange creatures, puny as you are, have vanquished us. Nothing in the universe can stand against man.

"I return now to the Fourth Dimension, never more to leave it, as no man ever more shall leave the Third. In my dimension I will remember you, Kramer. In yours remember me. And now, across the infinite gulf that sunders our intelligences, farewell eternally."

Somewhere in the Bronx, a pudgy, nearsighted little man, who now lived frugally on the returns from a real-estate legacy, must have read that story. That man was Charles Fort, who had contributed short stories to THE ARGOSY and THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, whose aspirations as a novelist were to remain unfulfilled, and who already was collecting thousands of "inexplicable happenings" for which he would form theories in his first volume of strange phenomena, *Book of the Damned*, to be

published in 1919. This book would deal with the possibility of superior intelligences from space visiting our world and regarding us with as much consideration as we would an insect, and it would offer hundreds of newspaper reports to substantiate the plausibility of his thesis.

Then, supreme irony, George Allan England would read *Book of the Damned* and be inspired by it to write a short masterpiece titled *The Thing from—Outside*, about an invisible entity that seeks to obtain the brains of earthmen for experimental purposes. "I had to read Charles Fort's *Book of the Damned* before writing the story," he wrote in the July, 1923, issue of THE STORY WORLD, in an article titled *Facts About Fantasy*. "I wonder if Fort will reciprocate by reading my phantasmagoria?"

*The Thing from—Outside* was rejected by ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY, but accepted by Hugo Gernsback for publication in the April, 1923, SCIENCE AND INVENTION. England, Fort's inspiration, had been enthralled when he found the reflection of his own ideas in someone else's work!

Before the conclusion of *The Empire of the Air*, Davis added another popular set of authors from THE CAVALIER, J. U. Giesy and Junius B. Smith, in a complete novel, *The Curse of Quetzal*, in the November 28, 1914, ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY. A cursed image is the basis for a murder and brings into play Semi-Dual's unorthodox methods of crime detection.

The complexity of the diplomacy required to keep a pivot author like Edgar Rice Burroughs happy was at no time better demonstrated than in the summer of 1914, after Davis had personally met with him and presumably ironed out all problems. Burroughs happily wrote Davis on July 20, 1914, enclosing some colored stickers promoting the hardcover *Tarzan of the Apes*. He followed it the next day with the revised manuscript of what was now titled *The Girl from Farris*'. The purpose of the change in name from the Anglo-Saxon "Harris" to the indeterminate "Farris" is puzzling, particularly since Farris' first name is Abe. Considering Farris' social status as the villainous owner of a house of prostitution, the implications of the altered name could have been, by a stretch of the imagination, misconstrued by Jewish readers.

Burroughs was startled to receive a rejection slip for the manuscript from assistant editor H. E. Coffin, dated August 3—especially since the story had been paid for the previous April. Davis was on vacation, but somehow his secretary found out about it and dispatched a letter on August 4 asking Burroughs to disregard the rejection. Davis, on his return August 18, wrote Burroughs that he would use the story.

Burroughs now began to worry about his image with the readers. He wrote Davis on September 19, 1914, wondering if *The Girl from Farris*

should not be run elsewhere, since the ALL-STORY CAVALIER WEEKLY readership had an antipathy to "smut." This again raises suspicions as to Burroughs' original motive in writing the story, which if not Machiavellian was at the very least capricious, in the sense that it seemed intended to intimidate Davis.

Davis, in accepting a sequel to *The Mad King*, titled *Barney of Custer*, on November 11, 1914, asked for a rewrite. Burroughs agreed, but requested a five-hundred-dollar advance on November 13, which was sent him. Burroughs always claimed to read very little fiction, but on November 14 he wrote to Davis highly praising E. Phillips Oppenheim's *Curious Quest of Mr. Ernest Bliss*.

As the magazine's first fantasy for 1915, Davis was able again to present Burroughs in his most effective format, with a sequel to *The Eternal Lover*, titled *Sweethearts Primeval*, a four-part novel appearing January 23 to February 13. When Victoria Custer disappears into the jungle on Tarzan's estate with Nu, the primitive man from one hundred thousand years past, they take refuge in a cave and are rendered unconscious by an earthquake. Victoria regains her senses, to find herself in the body of a prehistoric girl, with Nu as her mate. A series of thrilling adventures terminates where the story began, with Nu going out to hunt the sabertooth tiger, which will lead to his being trapped in a cave by an earthquake. Victoria, recovering after a faint at Tarzan's ranch, is told that all the adventures have passed through her mind in but three minutes. She refuses to believe it was only a phantasm and travels back to the site of the cave, where she finds "the crumbling skeleton of a large man. By its side rested a broken, stone-tipped spear, and there was a stone knife and a stone ax as well." A little beyond was "the grinning skull of a great cat, its upper jaw armed with two mighty, eighteen-inch, curved fangs."

*Pellucidar*, the sequel to *At the Earth's Core*, was purchased January 20, 1915, and \$1,522 was paid for its 60,900 words. The preciseness of the word count was due to Burroughs. He incessantly warred with Davis over even a few hundred words, and in this respect his letters read a great deal like Jack London's, with the exception that London was getting three times the rate of Burroughs, and a few hundred words could add up to a substantial sum.

Aggravated by these petty squabbles, Bob Davis quipped in his letter of September 29, 1914: "Believe me, Burroughs, you are one hell of a howler."

Burroughs was far more ingenious and imaginative than he has been given credit for. His stories are not merely transposals to a primitive terrain to provide a landscape for battles with men and beasts. In *Pellucidar*,

the dominant race are the Mahars, hideous reptiles who communicate telepathically through the fourth dimension and possess written records. Despite the fact that it is at the earth's center, Pellucidar has far greater land area than the surface, because the seas are smaller. The central "sun" has a satellite which tantalizingly offers evidences of water and vegetation. This satellite perpetually keeps a specified area in a twilight gloom, which causes it to be called "The Land of the Awful Shadow." With the aid of David Innes and Abner Perry, the savage tribes of Pellucidar are united and drive the Mahars from their territory. Guns and cannon are introduced, railroads built, the written word taught, and David Innes and his "mate," Dian the Beautiful, settle down to a satisfying life in their land of the central sun.

#### 14. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BURROUGHS' IMITATORS

THE QUANTITIES of material demanded by the weekly schedule of what had been THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE reduced the ratio of science fiction to the total fiction content of the publication during 1915. The science-fiction wordage of the fifty-two issues of 1915 did not greatly exceed that of the twelve issues of 1913. It was evident that even Burroughs, at his most prolific, could not have produced enough wordage to sustain sales for a *weekly* on the basis of his following alone. Issues without any fantasy content were frequent, and the four consecutive issues with August dating carried nothing in the vein of fantasy. By contrast, not a single 1913 issue had appeared without science fiction.

If there was a deliberate, planned reduction of the percentage of fantasy wordage in the contents, it was not a wise move, for the change in the title from ALL-STORY-CAVALIER WEEKLY to ALL-STORY WEEKLY with the issue of May 15, 1915, could have been interpreted as a sign of weakness, even though the simplified title was undoubtedly better. While Davis knew that the stories of Burroughs and England made significant differences in his circulation and reader response, was he actually aware of the differences between their type of scientific romance and standard science fiction?

There was one indication, at least, that he might be. On June 24, 1914, Bob Davis had bought from Charles Billings Stilson, a Rochester, New York, author, a fifty-nine-thousand-word novel titled *Polaris* for four hundred dollars. Why he held it for a year and a half, or nearly eighty issues, before publishing it can only be surmised. Perhaps the combination with THE CAVALIER had provided an excessive backlog of stories to be worked off. Perhaps the story on second reading raised cer-

tain doubts. *Polaris* was obviously directly inspired by *Tarzan of the Apes*, and its later situations were suggestive of Burroughs' Mars series.

Polaris is a man who has been raised in Antarctica and has never come in contact with any human being other than his father. He is in tune with his environment and possesses herculean strength and extraordinary intelligence. Upon the death of his father he sets north with a sledge and seven huskies. He rescues a girl who has been cast away on the antarctic shore, and on his trek across the icy wastes, kills great white bears with nothing more than his knife (the author was unaware that there are no bears at the South Pole, but alert readers did call the fact to his attention). Eventually they arrive in a valley, heated by a circle of volcanoes, in which an ancient Greek colony still survives. The population is kept under control by voluntary euthanasia. His adventures there were in keeping with Burroughs' Martian prototypes.

*Polaris* was published as *Polaris of the Snows* in three issues of ALL-STORY WEEKLY, December 18, 1915-January 1, 1916. It was a milestone in the development of the scientific romance, because it obviously was entirely influenced by Edgar Rice Burroughs. It helped create the trend toward the scientific romance, which at times during the next twenty years would be the most popular form of science fiction.

It was evident that there was room for more than one author in the Burroughs vein. It was also evident that science fiction, which too closely predicted scientific or sociological developments, was becoming frightening rather than Utopian. The greatest war in the history of mankind was in progress in Europe, and as the weapons of science, such as the submarine, zeppelin, airplane, machine gun, and later poison gas and tanks, played a nightmarish role in the conflict. The widely held belief that science would cure all the ills of mankind was shattered. Preceding the entry of the United States into the conflict, the Munsey magazines followed an official policy of limiting war stories in their pages. They became the magazines of escape. The scientific romances of Edgar Rice Burroughs, George Allan England, and Charles B. Stilson ideally fitted this policy, though they were still a long way from replacing traditional science fiction or even significant science fiction. The year 1915 had seen a number of unusual stories. Perley Poore Sheehan had come through with a four-part novel, *Judith of Babylon* (February 6-27), that was a remarkable anticipation of the use of propaganda, public relations, religion, and hypnotism to gain control of the masses. In that story, New York City is converted to the worship of Baal, and a second Babylon comes into being, whose existence threatens the nation.

The concept of lilliputian man was modernized in *Terror Island* (July 3, 1915) by Alex Shell Briscoe and might have been dropped into a

magazine thirty years later, with its tiny humans fighting giant insects, and seemed acceptable.

J. U. Giesy had embarked on the first of a series of humorous invention stories, better handled than most, with a story submitted as *Bumb and the Bomb* and published as *The Indigestible Dog Biscuits* in the same issue as *Terror Island*. It told of a device that explodes gunpowder without wires or fuses.

George Allan England had returned with *The Fatal Gift* (September 4-25), a four-part novel of the effort to impart to a woman who has every other mental and physical attribute, supreme facial beauty. Though he had created a situation in which there were powerful human and moral consequences to explore, England literally permitted the story to degenerate into a squabble and sword fight, throwing away excellent serious possibilities.

A far more remarkable and historically important work of his was the short story *The Tenth Question* (December 18). A doctor is lured to the home of a mad scientist who has a grudge against surgeons, since one did him a grievous wrong through a diagnostic error. The doctor is locked in a cage and told he will be given his freedom only if he can guess what the scientist is thinking of and in the process asking not more than ten questions. If he succeeds, he will go free. If he fails, he will be killed. He succeeds in guessing that the thought in the mind of his captor is the symbol "zero," and is freed, but the scientist still tries to kill him, and is himself killed.

There was an unexpected "sequel."

After the death of Stanley G. Weinbaum, outstanding science-fiction writer of the 1930's, an unpublished short story was found among his effects, which was printed in the December, 1936, issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES as *The Brink of Infinity*. It was about a mathematician lured to the home of a madman, who imprisoned him and said he would free him only if with the use of only ten questions he could determine the "mathematical quantity" he had in mind. If he failed, he would be killed, because an incompetent mathematician had been responsible for crippling his captor through an erroneous calculation. The first guess the mathematician makes is "zero," but when that proves wrong, he finally deduces it is "infinity minus itself" and is freed, but the madman tries to kill him and is in turn killed.

It seems quite impossible that Weinbaum got the idea from any other source than England. But he never offered it for sale, and its publication posthumously was by chance. The most ironic thing concerning it is that, despite its derivation, it is a minor masterpiece.

The foregoing, together with a now-renowned cloak-and-dagger thriller titled *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, by John Buchan, published as a two-parter in the June 5 and 12 issues were well received, but it was *Polaris of the Snows* that best suited the mood of the readers.

The author whose method and character were Stilson's model, Edgar Rice Burroughs, had *The Son of Tarzan*, a six-part novel, running concurrently with *Polaris* (December 4, 1915-January 8, 1916). Korak, Tarzan's son, now a teen-ager, inherits the great strength and jungle instincts of his father. A series of circumstances causes him to revert to the primitive with Akut, a great ape who once fought by his father's side. He grows to manhood, achieves Tarzan's physical prowess and aptitude with the animals, and finally marries an "Arab" girl who is actually the missing daughter of a French officer.

Sensing that even the artist P. Monahan had completely caught the mood of the *Polaris* story, Charles B. Stilson wrote a letter from 30 Exchange Street, Rochester, New York, which appeared in the January 22, 1916, issue, complimenting: "The *Polaris* from Mr. Monahan's brushes is so true to the *Polaris* I have seen in my imagination that the likeness actually startled me when I first saw it at the magazine stand. I should like Mr. Monahan to know that."

The very issue publishing that letter included the last installment of a four-part novel by Victor Rousseau, which had begun in the January 1, 1916, issue, *The Sea Demons*, which closely fitted the new trend. A horde of invisible deep-sea men invade the land areas of England behind the weapon of deadly quantities of hydrogen gas. Their motivation is hunger. The beautiful, almost translucent queen of the invaders is captured, and her mating instinct is aroused by the presence of Donald, the hero of the story. She issues a strange whistle which causes the sea men to "swarm" back to the sea. The rest of the race is sterile without her, and by not mating at her appointed time she quickly ages and dies, and with her perishes the monstrous horde.

Both Charles B. Stilson, primarily a writer of western and adventure stories, and Victor Rousseau, whose last name was Emanuel, were destined to become highly popular writers of the scientific romances in future issues of the Munsey magazines. Rousseau had the greater literary pretensions of the two. Born in London in 1879 of a Jewish father and French mother, the thought of being half Jewish tormented him most of his life, and he converted to Catholicism after having spent several years in South Africa, where he received his first journalistic training. He came to the United States and secured an editorial position on a magazine. "I was delighted when I found myself able to crash ALL-STORY and AR-

GOSY through the kindly interest of the god-father of so many writers in this country, that revered and almost legendary character, Bob Davis," he wrote in an autobiographical sketch published in 1931.

Victor Rousseau reached the high point in his literary career with the serialization of his novel *The Messiah of the Cylinder* in the June-September, 1917, issues of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE. The novel was Rousseau's version of *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), by H. G. Wells, and many of the things that Wells lightly touches on in his world of the future, where a man in suspended animation for hundreds of years arises to find himself near owner of the world, are explored in more personal terms by Rousseau.

Howard D. Wheeler, editor of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, was greatly impressed by the novel and made it the subject of a cover painting by Everett Shinn, a member of the artistic "The Eight" with John Sloan, and commissioned numerous line drawings by Joseph Clement Coll, some of which were reproduced in the book version published by A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, in 1917. Coll was characterized as "perhaps America's greatest virtuoso in the use of pen and ink" by Harold Von Schmidt in *The Illustrators of America 1900-1960's* (Reinhold Publishing Company, 1966). Further, "he commanded an awesome technical dexterity. He employed his penpoint as freely as a paintbrush," and was especially favored "for mystery stories by such authors as A. Conan Doyle and Sax Rohmer."

*The Messiah of the Cylinder* has the grave fault of imitation and suffers from lapses into pulp-writing carelessness; the bias of the author toward Catholicism is enough to embarrass a pope. All these faults acknowledged, it is a better story than *When the Sleeper Wakes*, moving forward with a drive and vitality rare in any novel. The author's presentation of a socialist tyranny of the future must be termed brilliant rather than ingenious, as he fascinatingly delineates its basis, regulations, terminology, and slang. This is all accomplished without ever losing the authenticity of relating these changes to human nature. It is on this last point, in his ability to offer psychological motivation for the actions of his characters, that portions of the novel achieve memorable poignancy. Despite its flaws, it is one of the most vigorous and readable "warning" stories ever to appear in science fiction.

In addition to the regular announcement in "Heart to Heart Talks," Bob Davis had given *The Sea Demons*, by Victor Rousseau, a full-page splash facing the opening story of the December 25, 1915, issue, in which he raved: "Not since Rudyard Kipling wrote *With the Night Mail* and created out of his own imagination, complete from keel to conning tower and from gas tanks to pithing iron, an air greyhound that could cross



the Atlantic in a night—a *real* airship, as convincing as a motorboat—has anything so realistic in the way of pure fantasy been written as *The Sea Demons*."

Rousseau's novel was in dramatic contrast to *The Air Trust*, by George Allan England, published in 1915 by Phil Wager, St. Louis. Bob Davis, who had serialized *The Golden Blight*, had better sense than to schedule this one, which told of a monopoly gaining control of the air and planning to enslave the masses in exchange for permitting them to breathe. The book came out for overthrow of the existing government by violent revolution and was illustrated by John Sloan, an artist with strong socialistic leanings. The artwork was probably contributed and the publication paid for by the author. Davis did give it a plug in the January 29, 1916, ALL-STORY WEEKLY, stating: ". . . *The Air Trust*, in which the author attempts to show that monopoly may someday reach the very air we breathe, is now on sale at all book stores for \$1.25 a copy.

"We did not publish *The Air Trust* in these pages, but nevertheless I sincerely hope that it will become one of the best-sellers. It was dedicated to Eugene V. Debs and is published by the National Ripsaw Company, St. Louis, Missouri."

The January 1, 1916, issue, in which *The Sea Demons* began, also contained installments of *Polaris of the Snows* and *The Son of Tarzan*. Apparently the circulation of ALL-STORY MAGAZINE needed a shot in the arm again, and the one quick, sure way Davis knew was to lard it up with fantasy.

What was the circulation of ALL-STORY MAGAZINE in 1916? A figure of "200,000 weekly" was published in the issue of December 2, 1916, in reply to a letter by a youngster who would one day become a science-fiction author, Wallace West. There is reason to doubt that figure, based on the published line rates for classified ads of the various Munsey magazines. The highest was MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, at two dollars a line; THE ARGOSY was second, at \$1.30, THE RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE third with eighty cents, and ALL-STORY WEEKLY last with sixty cents. MUNSEY'S had claimed four hundred thousand circulation in 1912 and had raised the price to fifteen cents from ten cents. By Frank A. Munsey's own admission, there had been a gradual decline in circulation as a result. It is quite probable that MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE was selling about three hundred thousand in 1915, for in November of that year the price had been reduced to ten cents to regain circulation.

If MUNSEY'S circulation was as estimated, ALL-STORY WEEKLY could have been selling as few as one hundred thousand, based on the ratio of its ad rate to circulation, and even THE ARGOSY only two hundred thousand. If MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE had retained its four hundred thousand

circulation of 1912, ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, at a maximum, could not have been doing over one hundred twenty-five thousand in weekly sales.

Were the Frank A. Munsey Company to receive one hundred per cent of the proceeds from the sale of ALL-STORY WEEKLY on one hundred thousand, it would have grossed ten thousand dollars. However, it had to give the newsdealers *IVI* cents a copy, so that left seventy-five hundred dollars. Since each issue ran well over one hundred thousand words, stories cost one thousand dollars per issue. In addition to Bob Davis, there was at least one other editor working on the magazine, plus a secretary. Paper, printing, and distribution were other major costs to be deducted from gross receipts. In balance, Munsey had his own ultramodern printing plant, so those costs were rock bottom. Munsey did his own distribution, eliminating the distributor's profit. It is still understandable why illustrations were left out: with an average of ten to fifteen stories an issue, even at five dollars a drawing they were important money, particularly when the price of making the engravings was added to the total.

In this tight situation, an author like Edgar Rice Burroughs presented a magazine like ALL-STORY WEEKLY, which obviously did not operate on a too generous margin of profit, with an economic problem. Davis had paid three thousand dollars for the hundred thousand word *The Son of Tarzan* on May 25, 1916. That was obviously the budget for *three entire issues*. The low rate of two-thirds cent a word received by Stilson and other authors was necessary to try to keep expenditures in line.

On June 17, 1917, Bob Davis rejected a novelette of Edgar Rice Burroughs titled *Ben, King of Beasts*. The core of the story involved a lion with a black mane whose life is saved by an American and who shows affection in acknowledgment of the fact. When the lion is captured and brought to the United States, it escapes but chances upon the American who saved its life, inadvertently helping him solve a serious problem. The story was not up to Burroughs' standard, but quite readable and entertaining. NEW STORY MAGAZINE also rejected it on July 3, 1915, but THE NEW YORK EVENING WORLD, which had reprinted Burroughs' novels in serial form since 1913, and through 1918 would run about a dozen, published it in six daily installments, November 15-20, 1915, under the title of *The Man Eater*. The paper sold for only one cent, so a Burroughs fan could obtain the complete work for only six cents.

Another short story, titled *Beyond Thirty*, was rejected by Bob Davis September 7, 1915. He asserted that it was a superb tableau, but he felt that nothing happened in the story. Its jumping-off place from World War I was also held against it, since ALL-STORY WEEKLY had a policy

of minimizing war stories. The story had first been submitted to THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, where it was refused August 13, 1915.

*Beyond Thirty* takes place two hundred years in the future, and in that entire time the continents of North and South America have been cut off from Europe because of submarine attacks and floating mines. The line of demarcation is 30 W, which is the derivation of the title. A plane which accidentally crosses this line ends up in England, and it is found that Europe has degenerated to savagery, and lions and tigers roam the sites of demolished cities. Abyssinia, which never entered the war, is relatively strong enough to prey upon the divided, disorganized, and diminished European nations. China has conquered all of the Far East and is the dominant power. The story was submitted to NEW STORY MAGAZINE, which had just changed its title with the December, 1915, issue to ALL-AROUND MAGAZINE, where it was published in the February, 1916, issue. The magazine badly needed the boost, for it was in serious trouble, but the one-shot wasn't enough to save it, and it expired with its March, 1917, number.

The rejection of *Beyond Thirty* was difficult to understand. It was one of Burroughs' most imaginative works up to that time, and only its dating upon the end of World War I prevented its being reprinted in book form during Burroughs' lifetime. To accept *The Girl from Farris'* (which still had not been published) just to keep Burroughs from going elsewhere, and then to permit *Ben, King of Beasts*, and *Beyond Thirty* to go elsewhere seemed inconsistent.

When Bob Davis wrote Burroughs on November 20, 1915, that he didn't like the new Tarzan novel, *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar*, and would consider it only if the rate were cut, the situation seemed to clarify. ALL-STORY WEEKLY was experiencing difficulties in building a profitable circulation, and this was affecting their ability and willingness to pay.

Burroughs sensed the situation and hopped a train for New York from Chicago. He visited Bob Davis at 8 West 40th Street on November 22, 1915, and had a long discussion about the matter. When he left to return to Chicago, the price had not yet been decided upon. On December 16, 1915, a check went out for twenty-five hundred dollars. While this was five hundred dollars less than for *The Son of Tarzan*, it actually represented an increase in rates, for *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar* was but sixty thousand words long, as compared to the former's one hundred thousand.

It can be seen that both Edgar Rice Burroughs and Bob Davis now had a problem. Burroughs realized that, temporarily at least, there was a ceiling on the rate of pay he could expect from ALL-STORY WEEKLY,

and that exception from rejection was a thing of the past. Bob Davis understood that he could no longer hope to keep Burroughs on a near-exclusive basis and that it would tax his budget to buy from him even occasionally. Yet he needed what Burroughs had to offer to sustain and build the readership of his weekly.

Burroughs lived in a Chicago suburb, at 6415 Augusta, Oak Park, Illinois. A favorite hangout of writers in Chicago was the White Paper Club, and Burroughs sometimes visited it. A leading literary figure in Chicago was Ray Long, considered one of America's great editors. He had worked under Benjamin B. Hampton as assistant editor of HAMP-TON'S MAGAZINE in 1910 and 1911. The extraordinary success of that magazine during those two years had attracted the attention of Louis Eckstein, publisher of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, and THE GREEN BOOK MAGAZINE in Chicago. Long came to work for him December 18, 1911, and replaced Karl Edwin Harrison, who took a position as managing editor of LADIES' HOME JOURNAL. When Ray Long took over RED BOOK, its circulation was two hundred twenty-five thousand. When he left to accept the editorship of COSMOPOLITAN on December 18, 1918, the circulation was over six hundred thousand.

Ray Long's assistant, working on BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, was Donald Kennicott, who had sold several nonfantasy stories to THE SCRAP BOOK and one to ALL-STORY WEEKLY as late as 1915. Kennicott was thoroughly familiar with Burroughs' works and knew of his impressive following.

Burroughs met the two editors at the White Paper Club, and the result was an offer by Ray Long to pay three hundred fifty dollars each for a series of twelve short stories (six thousand words in length) about Tarzan to be run in BLUE BOOK. This amounted to a rate of a little under seven cents per word.

Burroughs had a gentleman's agreement with Davis to give him first look at any Tarzan stories, so he wrote on March 17, 1916, telling him that he had been given a generous offer for a series of twelve shorts, and would there be any objection to the sale.

Davis was in no position to match the wordage rate, nor did he want to establish a precedent. On March 20, 1916, he replied that Burroughs could go ahead, since he was interested only in serials. This was quite patently untrue, since Davis had run a series of connected short stories by Sax Rohmer, and another with a slight fantasy twinge, *The Gods of the Invincibly Strong Arms*, by Achmed Abdullah. The twelve Tarzan stories were printed in BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE September, 1916-August, 1917, and were later placed in hardcover by McClurg, March 29, 1919, at \$ 1.40 as *Jungle Tales of Tarzan*.

In this series, Burroughs told anecdotes from Tarzan's early life, before he met Jane and married her. The episodes are superbly handled, displaying deep psychological insights on Burroughs' part. The initial story, *Tarzan's First Love*, was the subject of an illustrated appraisal, running over a full page, in THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW for December 22, 1968, by Saul Maloff. "There in the 'dark continent' of the mind . . . Tarzan comes alive, opens up, breathes; and so does the prose that lifts him into the low-swung trees," Maloff states. He reads much into the lines of that story, concluding: "This is the immortal Tarzan of the imagination—alone and desolate but also free, doomed to swing for eternity through the middle terraces between heaven and earth, seeking his murdered mother, whose loving boy he will always remain, and hers alone."

Davis, one of the great fiction editors of all time, in contest with another of the acknowledged great editors, was to discover that money counted for more than his persuasiveness. But he had anticipated the inevitability of losing his exclusivity on Burroughs and had taken steps to cope with the situation. He had bought and paid for enough Burroughs stories to last for two years or maybe longer. On hand was *The Girl from Farris'*, forty-one thousand words bought April 1, 1914, for one thousand dollars; *The Lad and the Lion*, submitted initially as a twenty-seven-thousand-worder, for which he paid six hundred seventy dollars on March 25, 1914, and then lengthened to thirty-eight thousand words, with an additional payment of two hundred seventy dollars going out on April 15, 1914; the thirty-nine-thousand-word *The Cave Man* was purchased for nine hundred seventy-five dollars on August 26, 1914; a new story in the Martian series, *Carthoris*, a forty-six-thousand-worder, had been bought on June 24, 1914, for \$1,150 and would be retitled *Thuvia, Maid of Mars*; *H. R. H. The Rider* was valued at eight hundred dollars for its thirty-four thousand words, which sum was sent January 4, 1916. The long-awaited sequel to *The Mucker*, *Out There Somewhere*, would still arrive, and he would pay one thousand seven hundred twenty-five dollars for its sixty-nine thousand words on March 29, 1916, and it would be published as *The Return of the Mucker*. These would have to do. Burroughs had kept all of his commitments, and he would not sell nor would Davis buy another work for almost four years, though there would be a steady exchange of correspondence during the entire period.

These facts make it apparent that the sudden highlighting of the science fiction of Charles B. Stilson and Victor Rousseau, both of whom had written nothing of that type before, was anticipatory. Author after author has credited Bob Davis with supplying him with the plot outlines of

stories. As other Munsey regulars who had written little previous science fiction began to specialize in it, it became evident that Davis was "inspiring" a "school" of imitators far more than had Burroughs' example. Davis' role as a creative imagination, in this light, must also be upgraded.

## 15. THE DAWN OF THE "DIFFERENT" STORY

"DID IT EVER occur to you as a reader of fiction that most stories drop naturally into a certain classification—belong more or less to a type?" Bob Davis asked his readers in the February 19, 1916, issue. "There is the straight love story, for instance; the adventure story, the detective story, the mystery story, the pseudoscientific story, and so forth and so on. . . ." It may very well have been the first time that the term "pseudoscientific" was ever used by the editor of a national magazine as a forerunner of what we today know as science fiction. It would be seen frequently in the twenty years to follow.

Of special significance was Davis' continuance: "Yet thousands of manuscripts that do not conform to any set category are being written every day; some of them real works of genius. . . . Such a story was Irvin S. Cobb's *Fishhead*, which caused such a sensation when it was published in THE CAVALIER for January 11, 1913. . . . The editor of this magazine has taken thought that perhaps you, dear reader, would like to get off the well-worn ways occasionally; would like to see for yourself a few of the queer, *outré*, unusual, bizarre, exotic, misfit manuscripts that we get occasionally; manuscripts that are mighty good, but so 'different' that they would ordinarily never be accepted. Of course *Fishhead* is an extreme case, and I don't necessarily mean stories like that at all. The tales might be humorous, fantastic, gruesome, dramatic, or what not; but they *would* be decidedly 'different.'

"And so the die is cast. Hereafter from time to time as such stories come in and are found acceptable, we will offer them to you."

The early "different" stories were not fantasy at all. The first was titled *The Million Passing Tales* (February 26, 1916), and was written by Perley Poore Sheehan. It was an attempt to illustrate that there was a human story behind each face seen in a large city and to show the interrelationship of their lives. It was realism bordering on stream of consciousness, a story without beginning or end, slices of many lives, and it was very popular. The second "different" story, *Inside Stuff*, by A. deFord Pitney (March 25), was told from the viewpoint of a lunch-counter cockroach who spoke in the vernacular, and raises the question as to whether or not this was the true origin of "Archie the cockroach"; the third, *The Kiss of Death*, by Laura Winthrow (April 8), expressed Ilie

triumphant, joyous thoughts of a woman who had poisoned her husband, whom she hated, without gathering suspicion and with no feeling of guilt; the fourth, *Blood of Sacrifice*, by Lillian B. Hunt, offered the situation of a Russian soldier who has given his blood to save the life of a woman who nursed him from death's door, but according to religious law cannot marry her now *because she is of the same blood*; the fifth, *The Savage and the Savant*, by Nalbro Bartley (May 6), tells of two brothers, one slight with a brilliant mind and the other a giant bum. The two plumb their psychological differences and finally come to terms with themselves and life. The sixth, *Every mother*, by Maude Pettus (May 13), was a Mother's Day novelette that told of the tribulations of a fisherwoman in raising her son and two daughters, one with an illegitimate child, and of the happy resolution of her problems; the seventh, *Feverworm*, by Edwin Carlile Litsey (May 20), is a story of a Kentucky backwoodsman who falls passionately in love with the poster of a woman circus rider, to discover that she is now a faded fifty.

There was, in every one of these stories, direct or implied elements of sex, repeated almost too often to be a coincidence. When Perley Poore Sheehan returned with his second "different" story, *Those Who Walk in Darkness*, an awkward combination of realism, mawkish writing ("But I can't marry you. I can't. I *can't*. I'm a bad girl. Oh, *now* do you understand? I'm—a—bad—girl!") about a man who marries a streetwalker, though he knows everything about her, it was obvious that "different" might be a label for a type of story other than the fantastic. This possibility was heightened by the dedication page of *Those Who Walk in Darkness*, when it was published in hardcover by George H. Doran Co. in 1917, together with its novel-length sequel, *The Scarlet Ghost* (January 6-March 10, 1917), where the ex-streetwalker finds that she must fight the attraction she still has for men and then returns to the city to rescue a young village girl who is being tempted into a life of prostitution. The book's dedication page read: "To him who told me this history complete and inspired me to set it down, my friend and collaborator, Robert H. Davis."

It was an era when the big-circulation magazines such as COSMOPOLITAN, HEARST'S INTERNATIONAL, and RED BOOK were strongly stressing sex. Davis, in trying to build circulation and to widen his women's readership, was doing the same thing, quite deliberately and calculatingly.

In this context the timing of the scheduling of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Girl from Farris* in four weekly installments beginning September 16, 1916, takes on some logic. In announcing the story, Davis said: "When a member of 'the oldest profession in the world' is loved honestly and blindly by an honest man, you get such a story as Perley Poore

Sheehan's *Those Who Walk in Darkness*, that startling 'different' story that we gave you in the June 10 number of this magazine. Then, on the other hand, when such a person loves honestly an honest and blind man, you get— . . . Well, you get the best thing, in many ways, that the creator of *Tarzan of the Apes* has ever written. And that's saying a heap, as you know mighty well!"

*The Girl from Farris'* was favorably though not wildly received by the readers. They preferred more imaginative Burroughs, which they had received in fair quantity that year. *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* (April 8-22) introduced Cathoris, son of John Carter and Dejah Thoris, who is a minor superman in his own right. Thuvia had appeared as a character in his earlier books and is befriended and rescued from diverse situations by Cathoris, eventually to fall in love with him. In the process, the white race of Lothar is discovered, a race that will eventually die out because they no longer have any women. It defends itself against savages by projecting images of phantom bowmen so realistic that their attackers die from power of suggestion when struck by an imaginary arrow. Burroughs engages in a philosophical discourse in this novel as to the nature of reality. Do any of us exist, or are we products of someone's imagination? Almost by way of complicating his thesis, Burroughs has the Lotharians project a Bowman who refuses to fade away after his work is done, but remains as a living man and participates in the action.

*The Return of the Mucker*, the long-awaited sequel, ran five installments (June 17-July 15) and cast Billy Byrne in an essentially western-hero role, south of the border. The story proved good entertainment, and Billy Byrne clears himself of a charge waiting for him in the United States and gets his girl, but it was far below the standard of *The Mucker*.

In the same issue in which *The Return of the Mucker* began, there was a change that possibly indicated growing circulation. The type size was made smaller, but the pages were not reduced, and each page contained eight hundred instead of six hundred words, increasing the fiction content by one-third. Each issue now contained nearly one hundred thirty-five thousand words of text for ten cents. The pages were reduced on November 16 to 176. An earlier straw in the wind was the appearance of a single interior illustration for Frank Condon's short story *Footprints* in the April 15, 1916, issue. The issue of July 1 began a policy of illustrations for most of the short stories, but none were carried for the serials.

Charles B. Stilson, who had to wait several years for the publication of *Polaris of the Snows*, now found that his sequel, *Minos of*



*Sardanes*, was rushed into print almost within months, published in three parts (August 12-26), to satisfy the demand for the Burroughs-type story. Polaris, having gone to America with his girl, learns that the Greek kingdom of Sardanes in Antarctica is doomed. The volcanoes that supply the heat that sustains the colony are to subside, so he organizes an expedition to save the land. Great inner strife occurs in Sardanes, and the young King Minos fails in saving most of his people as the high priest walks them off to extinction in the heart of the last active volcano. Polaris arrives in time to save Minos and his bride, Memene.

The early "different" stories had been offbeat but not fantastic. Often they were experimental devices for telling a story; one example, *Patched Reels* (September 23), was written like a moving-picture treatment, by reels, with appropriate flashbacks and shifts of location. Others leaned heavily on the psychological or psychiatric; Edgar Wallace's *The Devil Light* (July 22) is a special example: A German who is always aroused to suicidal frenzy by strong white lights leaps from a zeppelin that he is guiding to bomb an arms site in London when great searchlights train on him.

Stories that were truly fantastic and weird, given the appellation of "different," began to appear with *Platinum* (August 5), by Owen Oliver. Castaways on a desert island find themselves besieged by a tremendous serpent from the sea and great intelligent blobs with metallic bodies by land. The blobs can extend metal tentacles at will and have electricity and artificial light. When two of the blobs kill themselves in a fight, the tentacle of one is taken back to the United States upon the rescue of the castaways and is sold as pure platinum. It gradually changes to rotting flesh, and the story takes place in the context of a suit by the buyers to get their money back. *Twilight Zone*, by Mary Keegan, was a strange story of a woman who by a supreme effort of the will brings her dead husband to life. The doctor suspects she has abilities she will not confide, and after both she and her husband have lived meaningless lives for a year—"They were two strange friends, passing and meeting like shadows, never kissing, never touching hands"—the doctor is called and finds that the man is dead. "He wanted to go back, and I had to let him," she tells the doctor. The doctor is not satisfied. "A little longer and he would have come all the way. You were too impatient," he accuses her. If it were not almost a rewrite of Violet Hunt's masterpiece, *The Story of a Ghost* (CHAPMAN'S MAGAZINE, 1896), it could have been singled out as exceptional.

The August 19 issue, in which *Twilight Zone* appeared, was unusual in another respect. All the stories, except those serials written by men

which had been carried over from the previous week, were the work of women; actually eight of ten stories and all seven poems were by women, including one bit of verse by Faith Baldwin.

The trend toward applying the term "different" to science fiction had begun, but it was a single story that solidified it, and that was *Almost Immortal*, by Austin Hall. "You have never heard of Austin Hall," Davis told his readers. "Neither had we until we read this first child of his imagination." Hall was a westerner who lived in Mendota, California, a small town not far from Fresno. *Almost Immortal* was twenty-one thousand words long, and he was paid one hundred fifty dollars for it on July 6, 1916. It was a remarkable story for the images it attempted to convey, despite the fact that the author stylistically was not polished enough to do it justice. A young man, Robinson, disappears without a trace with an old man who has hired him for a research experiment, while they are both in the same room. The research doctor is a Tibetan that ten thousand years ago discovered a scientific method of blending solids together, and, through this method, absorbs a younger man about every twenty years, constantly prolonging his life. This time he has absorbed a man whose will is greater than his own, and one of the closing scenes tells of the "fantoms" of diverse men, from every era of mankind, suddenly converging upon the essence of Azev Avec, who had dissolved and imprisoned them all, seeking to destroy him, and his will stronger than all but Robinson's, who proves his undoing. The potentialities open to the author in presenting shades from innumerable ages and climes, released in one climactic struggle, were tremendous, but not exploited by the author. Later, other writers would make better use of the possibilities.

Austin Hall was an unequivocal success with the readers. In their letters they praised him as one of the finds of the year and asked for more "different" stories like *Almost Immortal*. It can be said that Austin Hall's work was the pivot in a gradual tendency on the part of the readers and the editors to increasingly use that designation for science fiction and fantasy, and eventually only rarely on stories that were primarily experimental in technique or subject matter. In addition, a single year had seen Bob Davis add three new giants in the tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs: Charles B. Stilson, Victor Rousseau, and Austin Hall.

For a while it appeared that the term "different" story might spread since it was used in PEOPLE'S in April, 1917, when they announced their first Semi-Dual story in May, *The Compass in the Sky*, and used again twice in PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE for October 25, 1918, announcing George Allan England's *On the Rack of Fear*, and also used in underscoring a change of policy in the magazine. It was used in its most

explicitly fantastic sense in the June, 1931, issue of MIND MAGIC MAGAZINE announcing *The Man From Ouija Land* by Ralph Milne Farley, long after Davis' tenure at Munsey and long after the Munsey magazines had given up the term.

## 16. TORRENT OF FANTASTIC TALENT

THE GREAT QUANTITY of material needed to fill ALL-STORY WEEKLY, plus the average low rates, required that special attention be given to the developing of new authors, and this was the area of Bob Davis' special genius. The year 1917 showed him in rare form.

A Californian who had tried without results to get into the war via Canada, and whose great goal in life was to be a poet, was resting in a twenty-five-cent-a-night Bowery hotel in New York. He picked up a Gideon Bible and turned to a passage which read: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Seek and ye shall find." He decided to add prose to his literary endeavors, and on January 31, 1917, was sent fifty dollars for a seventy-five-hundred-word short story titled *Convalescence*. It was a story of a girl who had made a living as a con artist, and had gone straight by taking up nursing. A former criminal acquaintance is brought in shot through the head. Her example causes him to reform, and they are married. Published in the March 31, 1917, ALL-STORY WEEKLY under the by-line of Frederick Faust, it was followed by a torrent of others, many under the pen name of Max Brand.

A Philadelphia widow named Gertrude Bennett, who resided at 4203 Girard Avenue, supported a daughter and an invalid mother on a secretary's salary. To supplement her income she took to writing fiction and submitted a thirty-four-thousand-word novelette to Davis titled *The Unwilling Adventurer*, about a New York man who goes to sleep on the ill-fated ocean liner *Lusitania* in the Atlantic and awakens to find himself struggling in the seas off an island in the Pacific. There, two competing groups are in rivalry to extract a substance from a hidden valley which will convert lead into gold. The valley contains man-eating plants, spiders as big as a dining-room table, bears as large as elephants, and bats of similar proportions. The air of mystery and the atmospheric buildup were superbly done, indicating a ranking talent. The author had requested that the story be published under the pen name of Jean Vail, but when it appeared as the feature story of the April 14, 1917, issue, it carried the man's by-line of Francis Stevens, and the title had been changed to *The Nightmare*. In forecasting it, Bob Davis related the plot to that of *Terror Island*, by Alex Shell Briscoe, because of the battles with the giant creatures, and accurately predicted the readers would want to read more

by this author. Gertrude Bennett was paid two hundred fifty dollars for the story September 7, 1916, and encouraged to write more.

A little-known writer, Harold Lamb, destined to become one of the world's most exciting historical novelists, was introduced to ALL-STORY WEEKLY readers with, of all things, a novelette with a naval background, titled *Somewhere in the Pacific*, published in the April 21, 1917, issue, and went on to do other navy short stories.

Ben Ames Williams, another author who many years later would write a famous best-seller, *Leave Her to Heaven*, was introduced as a science-fiction writer with the novel *The Powder of Midas* (June 16-July 7), where Germany during World War I has produced a powder developed by a seventeenth-century alchemist that will turn mercury into gold, and hopes to finance its war effort with it.

Up to now there had been "different" short stories and "different" novelettes, but the first "different" serial novel was a decidedly grotesque work titled *The Terrible Three*, by another Davis "find" who called himself Todd Robbins, serialized in four installments, July 14-August 4, 1917. Three circus freaks—Tweedle-dee, a dwarf; Hercules, a giant; and Echo, a ventriloquist—enter into an alliance that forwards the hatred and vindictiveness that the dwarf holds against the world. Murder results, and the fiendish ingenuity of the trio in utilizing their individual abnormalities and talents to further their designs results in possibly the greatest circus horror story ever written. Robbins had a superior stylistic quality as well as a macabre, humorous imagination, and Davis seemed prouder of "discovering" him than the scores of others he had featured. The truth was that Davis never discovered him at all. Robbins had two books published in 1912 by J. S. Ogilvie—*Mysterious Martin*, a grim novel of a writer who murders frequently so that he can describe the authentic sensation of the killer in his novels; and *The Spirit of the Town*, a crudely done allegory depicting civilization ("The Spirit of the Town") as a vile and onerous thing contrasted with nature ("The Spirit of Truth").

Philip M. Fisher, Jr., had begun writing shortly after graduating from the University of California in 1913, but had made no particular impression. His appearance in the August 18 ALL-STORY WEEKLY with *The Demise of Professor Manried* indicated that his true propensity was for science fiction, where he duetted in one short work the time-worn concept of antigravity and the modern idea of an electronic force field capable of stopping a bullet in flight.

Bob Davis' most wonderful find of the year 1917 was reflected in a "different" story by A. Merritt, the thirty-three-year-old associate editor of Morrill Goddard's fabulously successful Tin- AMERICAN WLHKI.Y, a supplement distributed with Sunday Hears! newspapers. Why Abraham

Merritt had begun to dream escape fantasies like *Through the Dragon Glass* (November 24, 1917) is a mystery that has not yet been solved. Certainly, as the right-hand man of Morrill Goddard, (whose salary would one day rise to two hundred forty thousand dollars a year), Merritt must have enjoyed a decent wage. The fifty dollars sent him on September 7, 1917, for the story could not have been his prime motivation. *Through the Dragon Glass*, a story in which Herndon, one of the pillagers of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion, steals a jade glass which is the doorway into a land spoken of in Chinese legend, and enters that land. There he discovers Santhu, with whom he falls in love, and the strange yellow-eyed sorcerer who commands the souls of all who dwell in that place, including a monstrosly beautiful, cruelly taloned bird. The story was told in poetic prose transcending that of most of the writers of the day. Merritt was obviously strongly influenced by Robert W. Chambers' *The Maker of Moons* (1896), not only in style but also in subject matter. Reader reaction, considering the brevity of the fantasy, was markedly favorable, for it fulfilled all the requirements of a fantastic romance most eloquently.

Bob Davis was well on his way to building a team that collectively, if not individually, would compensate for the loss of Edgar Rice Burroughs, which would become a reality as soon as the current inventory was depleted. For the moment, he carefully rationed out the Burroughs stories. *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar*, an exciting adventure in which Tarzan returns to the lost, decadent city of Atlantis and secures a treasure in jewels, which serves as the basis for much intrigue, was serialized in five installments (November 18-December 23, 1917). Again La, the priestess of Opar, one of the many memorable characters that live in Burroughs' novels, plays an important role. *The Cave Man*, sequel to *The Cave Girl*, which had been held since August 26, 1914, was presented in four parts, March 31-April 21, 1917. In this short novel, Waldo Emerson Smith-Jones, completely transformed from a cowardly weakling, gains ascendancy over the primitive tribe of the island, and when rescued takes the beautiful cave girl back to Boston with him, her suitability underscored by evidence that she is the lost waif of nobility. *The Lad and the Lion* had been held longest of all, since April 15, 1914. Rights to the unpublished manuscript was bought by the Selig Pyscope Co., Chicago, film producers in 1915 for an advance of five hundred dollars against an agreement of one hundred dollars per reel. It is quite possible that the appearance of the story was deliberately planned to coincide with the release of the film, for when it was serialized in three parts (June 30-July 14, 1917), the cover illustration by Modest Stein simulated a motion-picture screen inside a theater. The plot concerns a fourteen-year-

old son of European royalty who loses his memory from a blow on the head and spends four years on a derelict ship with a half-crazed mute and a young lion, with whom he becomes good friends. The lion kills the mute, and the two are cast ashore in Africa and cause a sheik much grief as the "lad" falls in love with Nakhla, a daughter. After much adventure, the "lad" is found to be a royal prince and is restored to his place, with a girl, who will be a future queen. When published in hardcover by Edgar Rice Burroughs in 1938, the book was lengthened.

Bob Davis, who also acted as an agent, selling subsidiary rights for his authors, sold to Ralph W. Ince, Arthur Hammerstein, and Lee Shubert the moving-picture rights to Max Brand's first novel, *Fate's Honeymoon*, which he serialized in five parts, beginning July 14, 1917. It told of an attempt of a confidence man to separate a girl from one hundred thousand dollars, by arranging a mock marriage, and the complications that came of it. These two moving-picture-related novels presented weeks apart represented excellent promotional tie-ins for ALL-STORY WEEKLY, and during 1917 that magazine, as well as THE ARGOSY, ran a number of others.

In the same issue as the first installment of *The Lad and the Lion*, Davis brought to his readers another Austin Hall "different" novelette of twenty-six thousand words, for which he paid two hundred dollars on April 18, 1917. The plot dealt with the transference of bodies, an old theme, with the difference that it conceived of the idea of "rebel" souls, those who live through the ages, taking possession of individuals and turning them contrary to their natures. Such souls were alleged to be responsible for Alexander the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte wasting their great genius. The similarity to the plot of *Almost Immortal*, of a man living for ten thousand years by absorbing other bodies, is obvious, and while *The Rebel Soul* presented a stronger human situation, it was an inferior story.

Probably the highlight of the later part of the year was the third in the Polaris trilogy, *Polaris and the Goddess Glorian*, by Charles B. Stilson, a five-part serial, September 15-October 13, 1917. It was a scientific romance in the finest Burroughs tradition, with a high degree of originality on the part of the author. Again it was a mixture of Tarzan and the Mars series, with Polaris killing a raging bull with a knife, and the scientific cities of Adlaz, whose men have devices for breathing under water and great submarines with destructive rays. Stilson solves for all time the time-worn dilemma of the priestess of the lost race who must give up the hero she loves to another girl with a more appropriate background. Glorian, the frustrated princess, is forced to perform the ceremony binding Polaris, whom she loves, to the American girl he rescued in the

antarctic. But she possesses the secret of prolonging life, and without his knowledge is keeping him youthful and intends to marry him when his wife dies of old age.

For the first time, with *Polaris and the Goddess Glorian*, Burroughs evinced awareness that attempts were being made to develop authors who employed his method. The matter was brought to his attention by Ray Long, editor of RED BOOK and BLUE BOOK, seeking to secure Burroughs' production for his own publications. Burroughs was engaged in writing a long novelette entitled *The Lost LI Boat*. On September 11, 1917, he wrote to Davis asking for a plot outline of the Stilson story. A one-thousand-word synopsis was sent to him by Davis, which he received September 13.

There was no response from Burroughs, but when he completed *The Lost U Boat* on October 15, 1917, he brought it personally to the offices of Ray Long in Chicago. On November 3 Long sent him a check for one thousand dollars. Davis never got a look at the story, nor was he notified that it had been written.

The addition of the aging Julian Hawthorne, son of Nathaniel Hawthorne, seventy-one years old, to the list of regular contributors to ALL-STORY WEEKLY was small compensation for what now appeared to be a widening estrangement with Edgar Rice Burroughs. Hawthorne had written scores of science-fiction, supernatural, and fantasy tales in his long career, but *The Cosmic Courtship*, subtitled "An Inter-Planetary Romance," which was pictured on the cover of the November 24 issue and which would run for four installments, was a bit far-out even for him. It opened in the New York City of 2001, where air, water, and land were clear of any contamination. All industry and many residences were thousands of feet underground, and fifteen million people resided in the greater New York area, which stretched forty miles north into Connecticut and Long Island and five miles south into New Jersey. Individuals had antigravity belts to fly around in, predating Buck Rogers. The soul of the heroine is whisked to Saturn, where it is kidnapped by the king of a nearby world. The hero permits himself to follow her to Saturn, even though a method of return has not yet been devised. The style of the story is stilted Victorian, and the situations are a bizarre mixture of science, magic, mysticism, and mythology. The strangest element of all is that of overt sexuality as a motivating factor in the plot, unexpected when given the style of presentation. Julian Hawthorne would write a number of other short novels for ALL-STORY WEEKLY and THE ARGOSY, primarily dealing with the supernatural and the occult, and they would all contain a surprisingly strong sexual clement. In earlier years he had written much more effectively, selling to some of the leading magazines. Just as he provided a market for young writers on the way up, Hob Davis was

also a haven for old writers on their way down. In this case, the subject of a scientific romance combined with a famed name had turned the trick.

The year 1917 had been one of consequence for ALL-STORY WEEKLY. A prime cadre of outstanding new writers, both in and out of fantasy, had been developed. There would not be as much of Burroughs after the end of the year, but for the present enough was being published to satisfy readers, and an interesting by-product was the "Tribes of Tarzan," the idea of a series of fan clubs across the country, which Davis had first mentioned to Burroughs in a letter of December 13, 1916. The January 20, 1917, number ran an item headed "The Tribe of Tarzan Organized," telling of the boys of Staunton, Virginia, who had formed the first such tribe. They had a Tribe Room, grass ropes, and bows and arrows and hunting knives; Edgar Rice Burroughs was having medallions struck for them symbolic of Tarzan's diamond-studded golden locket. Chief of the First Tribe of Tarzan was Herman Newman.

The United States had entered World War 1 April 6, 1917, and ALL-STORY WEEKLY'S policy of running nothing on the war had abruptly changed. Four pages of martial poems under the heading of "Red, White, and Blue" preceded the fiction of the May 19, 1917, issue. The note of war bugles sounded through poem after poem, culminating in the issue of August 4, 1917, when *every story in the issue was a war story*, including Perley Poore Sheehan, Louis Tracy, George Allan England, and Henry Leverage, as well as Sheehan coming back for seconds under the pen name of Paul Regard.

The classified-advertising rates in ALL-STORY WEEKLY rose from sixty cents to seventy-five cents a line with an announcement in the June 9, 1917, issue, an increase of twenty-five per cent. Since the rates of the other magazines in the Munsey group did not advance, this must be translated into a comparable gain in circulation. As it moved into mid-1917, ALL-STORY WEEKLY must have attained a circulation of at least one hundred and twenty-five thousand weekly, with a possibility of a maximum up to one hundred fifty thousand. By cutting out the leading between lines, the wordage was increased by twenty-five thousand with the June 30, 1917, number, with no change in price, raising average fiction content to one hundred sixty thousand words an issue. The wordage dropped back to one hundred and thirty-five thousand words by restoring the leading with August 11, with no explanation of either change ever given.

The classified-advertising line rate of ALL-STORY MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY was combined at \$1.50 for appearance in both magazines. Previously it had been \$1.30 for THE ARGOSY and seventy-live cents for



ALL-STORY WEEKLY. The reason for the combination rate was quick in coming. With the issue of October 6, 1917, THE ARGOSY was made a weekly with 192 pages, sixteen more than ALL-STORY WEEKLY for ten cents, with the same general content. If ALL-STORY WEEKLY had been an experimental publication calculated to determine whether a weekly all-fiction pulp magazine was feasible, it had succeeded. THE ARGOSY undoubtedly still had the larger circulation, but now it was in direct competition with ALL-STORY WEEKLY and a better buy for the money. The major difference in content was that THE ARGOSY ran no "different" stories, no Edgar Rice Burroughs, and for the past two years had run very little science fiction. The most notable they did print was *Who Is Charles Avison?* (April, 1916), by a man with an "obvious" pseudonym, Edison Tesla Marshall. It was a remarkable story, perhaps the first on the twin-worlds theme, of there being another earth with identical history and inhabitants never seen because it is in perpetual eclipse of the sun. Two Charles Avisons set out in space ships, but the movement of a comet forces one to crash on his earth and the other to land while they are burying his duplicate. Edgar Wallace, who was a contributor to the Munsey magazines at the time of publication, may very well have received from it his inspiration for his short novel *Planetoid 127* (Readers Library, 1929), which has an identical theme. After a few more stories, Marshall dropped the use of the middle name and went on to literary acclaim with historical novels as Edison Marshall.

THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, when created in 1905, was an alternative to increasing the publication frequency of THE ARGOSY as an answer to the competition of other all-fiction pulps. It proved to be a sound concept, and it prospered. THE CAVALIER was an attempt to establish a *third* monthly with a related policy by Munsey, and it failed. THE CAVALIER, then tried as a weekly, proved that a small but dependable audience would support such frequency, and the combination with THE ALL-STORY showed that an exceptional magazine could be profitable as a weekly.

Now with THE ARGOSY also a weekly, Munsey published eight to ten issues a month. It must have been obvious to Bob Davis that THE ARGOSY was now his *major* competition, rather than THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, ADVENTURE, THE BLUE BOOK, PEOPLE'S, or SHORT STORIES.

Except for a nonfantasy short novel in the drawer, Davis had no Edgar Rice Burroughs to employ as his standard solution to a tough competitive situation. His campaign to develop a new group of fantasy writers in place of Burroughs was well under way before. THE ARGOSY was made a weekly, and was gaining momentum now. A. Merritt, the daydreaming associate editor of THE AMERICAN WEEKLY, had submitted a short story which Davis was aware had literary quality far beyond almost

anything he had ever run. "The author has painted scenes and persons not of this earth—a powerful pageant of horrors which, fortunately, are fictitious," he blurbed in his announcement for the "different" story, *People of the Pit*, which opened the year in the January 5, 1918, issue. An Alaskan explorer discovers a seemingly bottomless staircase which leads into the depths of an extinct volcano, where a race of sluglike creatures, with the power to float in air, worships an ancient God that no longer exists. The account of the explorer's imprisonment, escape, and climb back up the endless staircase to freedom and death is a masterpiece of the genre and made a greater impact than almost any other short work of science fiction the magazine had ever run. It had been a good buy at sixty dollars for its sixty-five hundred words.

One of the great magazine successes of World War I was POPULAR SCIENCE MAGAZINE, which featured marvelous covers of speculative invention and imaginative handling of contents, under the editorial direction of Waldemar Kaempffert. For ALL-STORY WEEKLY it was a scoop to run *The Diminishing Draft* by him in the February 9 issue, a well-thought-out story of a man who stumbles upon a chemical which will reduce living things to a fraction of their size, and who then restores them with a saline solution. Actually, Kaempffert had been a Munsey contributor before he became POPULAR SCIENCE MAGAZINE'S editor, with a forty-three thousand-word novel, *Terror*, serialized in four parts in THE SCRAP BOOK, December, 1908-March, 1909.

Irvin S. Cobb, now in even far greater demand than the days when he had written *Fishhead* for THE CAVALIER, produced for friend Bob Davis *The Gallowsmith*, another masterful tale of horror, telling of a professional hangman and the psychology of the grotesque death that came to him. So exalted was Cobb at the time that Davis ran a photograph of him on the cover and had the text of the story set straight across the page like a book to differentiate it from the standard two-column format of the magazine.

In the March 9 issue Davis was able to introduce another discovery, a "different" complete novel titled *The Planeteer*, by an unknown named Homer Eon Flint. A resident of San Jose, California, Flint had submitted the novel as *The Danger Doctor* and had been paid three hundred dollars for its thirty-nine thousand words on October 25, 1917. The earth of the twenty-third century is so overpopulated it cannot feed the masses. By upsetting the gravitational balance of the solar system with a planetoid dislodged from orbit, the earth is shifted to the vicinity of Jupiter, which planet, already inhabited by semihuman creatures, serves as the bread-basket for the food-shy billions. It was a cosmic concept, and the readers loved it.

Julian Hawthorne, who had been so inept at his interplanetary romance, *The Cosmic Courtship*, returned with power, skill, and authenticity in *Absolute Evil* (April 13), a fine supernatural story of the girl descendant of a New England witch who fights and destroys a clergyman who has, through the black arts, learned to transform himself into a wolf.

The true format of the scientific romance reappeared with *Draft of Eternity*, a four-part novel by Victor Rousseau (June 1-22, 1918). The novel had a marvelous title, a superb cover, and an imaginative situation where a drug carries the physician of a private hospital and his Hindu friend one thousand years into the future, when the nation has lapsed back into savagery amid the ruins of its civilization, which rests layer upon layer atop old Manhattan. The whites of this period are slaves who labor in the depths of the city. There are good characterizations and some taut situations, but the story is carelessly written and plotted and disappointingly slapdash in organization. The readers, hungry for the unusual, found virtually no fault, and it would be reprinted in hardcover by John Long, London, as *The Draught of Eternity* in 1924, under the pen name of H. M. Egbert.

The June 22 issue, which carried the conclusion of *Draft of Eternity*, featured a "different" novelette by A. Merritt that was to make science-fiction history. It was *The Moon Pool*, and the author had received two hundred dollars for its seventeen thousand words on March 21, 1918. The readers had never experienced such word magic as Merritt's description of the strange pool on a Pacific island, from whose depths emerged an entity of pure energy, carrying the wife of an explorer through the "gateway" that led to an underground or extradimensional civilization. Not since Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Under the Moons of Mars* had there been such a demand for a sequel. Davis had another winner!

There was more than one arrow in his quiver. In his campaign to create substitutes for Edgar Rice Burroughs, he had turned to J. U. Giesy, who was perennially popular with his Semi-Dual occult detective stories but had previously shown that he could do effective science fiction of the routine variety. The result was the first of a new trilogy, a novel with the intriguing title of *Palos of the Dog Star Pack*, which opened the issue of July 13 as a five-part serial concluded August 10. Davis had gotten a bargain, paying but five hundred dollars for the seventy-seven thousand words. The hero, Jason Croft, is able to project his astral body to the planet of Palos, which revolves around the great star Sirius. He takes possession of the powerful body of Jason of Nodhur, a handsome but feeble-minded youth, at the moment of death, and sets out to win the hand of Naia, princess of Tamarizia. His knowledge of earthly science results in both the creation of weapons of destruction and (lie advancement

of the peoples of Palos. The story was fascinating and well told, in the precise tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Mars series.

Max Brand, who today is remembered as one of the world's great western-story writers, revealed a phase of his personality that enabled him to write fantasy either horrifying or poignant. *John Ovington Returns* (June 8), a six thousand-worder for which he received forty dollars, told of a man who returned to claim the incarnation of his love after three generations. *Devil Ritter* (July 13) was a novelette thirty-one thousand five hundred words in length that brought him three hundred dollars. The character, Devil Ritter, finds in a woman a mind that can transmit to him, like a radio, all its impressions from anywhere in the world. The eerie coalition of talents results in great evil.

"Because of what we have said, don't run away with the idea that it is 'one of those impossible stories,' " Bob Davis wrote in announcing *The Labyrinth*, a novel-length contribution by Francis Stevens, whose discovery he had made with *The Nightmare* a year past. His statement seemed to codify the term "impossible" stories for science fiction, which was to vie with "pseudoscientific" and "different" as proper terminology. *The Labyrinth*, while not technically a fantasy, was strange enough to be classified as one. A group of people find that a pavilion in a governor's garden opens beneath them, dropping them into a complex maze of elaborate tunnels and doors, all adorned with cryptic messages contrived by the original builder to wreak psychological vengeance on an enemy. The story was extremely well handled.

Several other shorts by Francis Stevens were superbly done. *Friend Island* (September 7) takes place in the future, when women are the dominant sex, and one is shipwrecked on an island that is *alive*, with a man who hurts the feelings of that island with his uncouth language. *Behind the Curtain* (September 21) tells of a collector whose artifacts include the sarcophagus of a beautiful Egyptian princess. He replaces her with the body of his young wife, poisons the man she loves, and then awakes to find with gratitude that it is all a dream and decides that he will let his wife have her freedom and enjoy the rest of his days in the quiet company of his Egyptian princess.

In the October 12 issue Davis was able to present his readers with a sequel to *The Planeteer*. He had changed the title of the forty-two thousand word short novel for which he had paid three hundred fifty dollars from *When the Earth Froze* to *King of Conserve Island* and had run it complete. He rated Homer Eon Flint against Edward Bellamy as "an equally clever sociologist with a vastly more brilliant imagination," and regarded it as more than an action story, staling: "If you arc of a philosophic mind, read it for the gems of thought it contains." Homer Eon

Flint was not a good writer, but he had ideas galore, and *King of Conserve Island* was actually a Utopia with enough action to keep it moving. The main plot involved a future monarch of earth attempting to gain control by force over the planet Jupiter, and a device of a space-fleet officer which cuts off all heat from the sun, freezing everyone until the king abdicates. The story is jammed with imaginative descriptions of the life and technology of those worlds of the future, which is its main point of interest and undoubtedly why Davis published it.

A more surprising anti-Utopia followed from Todd Robbins, *Safe and Sane*, a three-part novel in the issues October 26-November 9, billed as "The Strangest Story of the Decade." In the world of 1950, there are so many millionaires that they make up the middle class. They have it in for the geniuses and inventors who have made them so comfortable that they are bored, and they form a Millionaires' League, dedicated to killing off the gifted. The story ends as a dream and with the message that man is loved more for his foibles than for his strengths and that the criterion of worth should not be solely ability.

Science fiction was not Todd Robbins' forte, but a combination of horror with levity was, and *Who Wants a Green Bottle?* (December 21), which tells of how Laird Kilgour traps the soul of his Uncle Peter in a little green bottle, the price he exacts to release him, and the consequences, is a permanent jewel in the diadem of supernatural classics.

As the year 1918 drew to a close, as if to cap off the astonishing feat of presenting a bonanza of brilliant new talent, Bob Davis dusted off his last Edgar Rice Burroughs short novel, *H. R. H. The Rider*, and ran it in three installments (December 14-28). It was smoothly written and entertaining, about a prince who changes places with a bandit and a princess who thinks she doesn't want to marry the prince. The countries are mythical, and that is as close as the novel came to being fantastic.

## 17. GOLDEN AGE OF THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE

BLUE BOOK was the major recipient of Edgar Rice Burroughs' "largess" during the year 1918. *The Oakdale Affair*, a short novel, was published complete in the March, 1918, issue. Its opening was similar to *H. R. H. The Rider*, with which novel it was published in hardcover by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., in 1937. A daughter of a banker, who does not want to be joined in marriage to a man not of her choosing, dresses as a boy and pretends to be a bad "man" known as the Oskaloosa Kid. With a former acquaintance of Billy Byrne (the Mucker), she roams the countryside, becomes involved in a murder, and is almost lynched. This mildly entertaining tale would not have been a serious loss to A.L.I.-STOKY

WEEKLY, but the three short novels that BLUE BOOK followed it with were among the finest science fiction of Burroughs' career. *The Land That Time Forgot* (title changed from *The Lost V Boat* by editor Donald Kennicott), published in the August issue, told of a German U-boat of World War I that is captured by the crew of a British tugboat and forced to put in on an unknown Pacific island, where dinosaurs still exist. And exploration northward up a river is carried forth on the island, each few miles bringing increasingly advanced human races, seven in all, from apelike, speechless primitives to those with highly advanced weapons and superior culture. The story of this adventure is put in a manuscript and cast adrift.

A sequel, *The People That Time Forgot*, in the October issue, finds the manuscript returned to civilization. A plane sent out to search for the castaways is forced down by a pterodactyl, and the pilot, Tom Billings, is thrust into this strange land. He learns that the entire evolutionary scale of man occurs in seven stages in one lifetime, as individuals move from one culture to another. The highest culture is where there is natural birth, instead of from hatching offspring eggs. At one time the evolution continued to an eighth stage, a winged race called Weiroos. This natural chain was broken by conflict between the highest wingless culture and the Weiroos as to which was the dominant species. Since only male Weiroos are born, they must steal females to mate with, hoping that someday a dual-sexed winged race will emerge.

The final novel in the trilogy appeared in December and was titled *Out of Time's Abyss*. It carries one of the characters into a city of the Weiroos, which race is far more highly developed than anything else yet seen, with a written language, credit arrangements, and various other elements related to civilization. It is discovered that eggs laid by various strata of females below the top of the evolutionary scale hatch into primitive reptilian creatures, and the chain of evolution extends through the entire life scale, not merely the humanoid.

A theory similar to that in *The Land That Time Forgot* trilogy had been included by A. Conan Doyle in his famed book, *The Lost World*, published in 1912, but the emphasis and elaboration given it by Burroughs gave him the right to call it his own.

Burroughs received one thousand dollars for each part of his trilogy, and on October 17, 1918, Ray Long asked for another series of twelve Tarzan short stories, the first six to be paid for at four hundred and fifty dollars apiece and the second six for five hundred dollars each.

The relatively better fortunes of Air-STORY WEEKLY in 1917 had emboldened Bob Davis to make Burroughs an offer in a letter of December 6, 1917, of three thousand dollars for a Tarzan story or twenty-live

hundred dollars for a tale of Mars. He rejected two days later a twenty-eight-hundred word short by Burroughs (which has never been published) titled *The Little Door*. There is some indication that the story might have had a war theme.

It seems probable that Ray Long, during this period, was using the Polaris series and other fantastic-story developments of ALL-STORY WEEKLY to convince Burroughs that Davis was developing competition to him. Burroughs submitted no first-look fiction to Davis, but maintained correspondence, sending him comprehensive diaries of family vacations. Burroughs also persistently tried to get Davis, with his newspaper connections, to use his influence to get him accredited as a war correspondent. There is evidence in the tone of Davis' letters that he was strongly against the idea, despite the urgings of Burroughs.

Besides the problem of trying to get back on some sort of working relationship with Burroughs, Davis now found THE ARGOSY moving toward increasing frequency of fantastic stories as part of its weekly program and using authors he had developed. Victor Rousseau's unusual fantasy *Fruit of the Lamp*, a four-parter (February 2-23, 1918), about a young bachelor who rubs an old lamp and gets a beautiful Jinnee, subservient to his every wish, capable of disappearing and appearing at will, and insisting upon living with him, was delightful. If this story seems similar to the popular television series / *Dream of Jeannie*, it's because they are virtually identical.

What probably hurt Davis was the purchase of the ninety-seven thousand-word novel *The Citadel of Fear* from his talented find Francis Stevens for eight hundred and fifty dollars, on February 14, 1918, by the THE ARGOSY. The novel required seven installments (September 14-October 19) to tell the bizarre adventures of superhero Colin O'Hara in dread encounter with the monstrous conjurings of the lost Mexican city of Tlapallan, repository of Aztec "science," and the defeat of a horror that might have been loosed on modern civilization. Stevens had proved that with heavy emphasis on the unknown sciences she could write a romance that was the equal of any of them.

The classified-ad line rate of THE ARGOSY and ALL-STORY WEEKLY combination went up from \$1.50 to \$1.75, which reflected an increase of one-sixth of the combined circulations. Which magazine had gained the most it was not possible to determine, but the reliability of the figure as an indicator of circulation could be checked against the drop of fifty cents per line in the rate for MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, which had raised its newsstand price to twenty cents in March, 1918, and undoubtedly had lost circulation as a result. It was quite probable that the combined weekly circulation of the two pulps now approached three hundred thousand.

The literary quality of ALL-STORY WEEKLY was outstanding, and the fantasy authors played a substantial part in keeping it high. Writers like A. Merritt, Francis Stevens, Todd Robbins, Ben Ames Williams, Irvin S. Cobb, Max Brand, Julian Hawthorne, A. T. Quiller-Couch, Achmed Abdullah, and Harold Lamb were stylistic achievers. The March 1, 1919, ALL-STORY WEEKLY announced the eighty-third hardcover book from its pages, *The Gods of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, from A. C. McClurg; *Under the Moons of Mars*, under the title of *A Princess of Mars*, had appeared a year earlier from the same publisher. During 1918 fifteen novels from ALL-STORY WEEKLY had seen hardcover, and there had been a half-dozen moving pictures from its stories. The idea of promoting the number of novels that had gone into hardcover from the pages of a magazine was not new. THE POPULAR MAGAZINE ran a full-page house ad listing 20 of its own in the issue of January 7, 1915, and offered to supply them to readers. This was to counter a new policy of THE ARGOSY running a complete novel each issue as did THE POPULAR MAGAZINE.

Even more remarkable, Edward J. O'Brien's annual collection of the best twenty short stories of the year reprinted two from ALL-STORY WEEKLY for 1918—*A Simple Act of Piety*, by Achmed Abdullah, and *The Gallowsmith*, by Irvin S. Cobb. In addition, thirty-seven other short stories had rated honorable mention, more than any other all-fiction magazine in America. Among the fantasies in honorable mention were *Light*, by Achmed Abdullah; *Old Aeson*, by Sir Arthur T. Quiller-Couch; *Wings*, by Achmed Abdullah; *The People of the Pit*, by A. Merritt; *John Ovington Returns*, by Max Brand; and *Queer*, by Philip M. Fisher.

With the advantage of hindsight it can be said that ALL-STORY WEEKLY in 1919 got off to an auspicious start with a novel of heart and artery operations by Ben Ames Williams, appropriately titled *After His Own Heart* (January 4-25). The story was quite convincing on the scientific possibility of heart transplants, therefore prescient.

Davis brought George Allan England back with *Cursed* (January 11-February 15), a six-part novel of an inhumanly cruel sea captain cursed by the witch-woman mother of a Malayan girl he first kidnapped, then killed, who experiences a long life of tragedy culminating in seeing his grandson, whom he loves, cursed with the foul nature of his own youth. England's story was a borderline fantasy, but the announcement of a six-part novel; *The Conquest of the Moon Pool*, by A. Merritt (February 15-March 22), was one of the milestones in the history of the scientific romance, and one of the greatest chapters in ALL-STORY WEEKLY'S era.

"Do you remember *The Moon Pool*?" Davis asked.

"Foolish question No. 9,876,543, that!" he replied to his own question.



Since *The Moon Pool's* publication on June 22, 1918, A. Merritt's name had ranked second only to that of Edgar Rice Burroughs with ALL-STORY WEEKLY readers. Davis' statement that he had received hundreds of letters concerning it was borne out by his own readers' department, and the one thousand dollars paid for the hundred and twenty thousand words of the sequel was a shrewd bonanza. The cover showed a tentaclelike mass of pure energy drawing Edith (wife of the explorer Dr. David Throckmartin) into the Moon Pool and was aptly blurred "An Amazing Sequel to an Unparalleled Adventure." At the novel's opening, Davis quite accurately enthused: "... a story so weird, so soul-stirring, and of such tense and terrible interest to every human being that even the title 'different' but weakly describes its uncanny fascination."

Three people have disappeared into the Moon Pool, and three others manage to actuate its strange mechanism to follow them into a world that is either inside the earth or in another dimension. There is action and color and drama aplenty, but the allure of the novel rests in the bizarre, poetic images it conjures up of the Shining One, the creature of pure force; Yolara, its priestess; Lugar, the inner-world Hercules; Lakla, the handmaiden to the enigmatic Silent Ones, who are the immense forces of good against the evil of the Shining One and its minions. There are races of frog men and of dwarfs, and though effectiveness of characterization and the flow of the writing are sometimes uneven in quality, the transcendental imagination of A. Merritt comes through, as do the flashes of near poetry and moments of poignancy wrung from encounters with nonhuman creatures that in a lesser hand could easily have become ludicrous. The novel, together with the original novelette, would go into hardcover in 1919 from Putnam, with a jacket and frontispiece by J. C. Coll and a dedication to Robert H. Davis which reads: "In appreciation, among many other things, for Larry O'Keefe's faith in the fairies." Fifty years later the book would still be in print and have sold a million paperbacks.

With "an actual ebullition of joy," *The Girl in the Golden Atom*, a twenty-two thousand-word science-fiction novelette, appropriately written by a man who had worked for and was born on the same day as inventor Thomas Alva Edison (February 11), was introduced for the March 15 issue. "As a flight of pure imagination, plus a most unusual scientific knowledge, and plus again a rare power of fantasy and delicate romance, it is our firm belief that it has few equals either in modern fiction or the classics." The story had been submitted as *The Girl in the Ring*, and Davis figured it was his prerogative to change the title when he paid two hundred dollars for it on November 13, 1918.

Ray Cummings said the idea was inspired by an ad for Ouaker Oats, showing an endless series of identical labels dwindling into nothingness.

Actually, the beginning of the story very closely parallels *The Diamond Lens*, by Fitz-James O'Brien (ATLANTIC MONTHLY, January, 1858), where a man sees a girl living in a drop of water on a glass slide of his microscope. In Cummings' romance, a young man sees beneath the lens of a microscope a girl in a cave within the wedding ring of his mother. The major difference in the two stories is that Cummings' hero invents a drug that shrinks him small enough to enter the microscopic world and have a series of adventures and a beautiful romance, in the best tradition of Edgar Rice Burroughs. The reaction to the story was similar to that of Merritt's *The Moon Pool*, inspiring a sequel, of full novel length, published in six parts the issues of January 24-February 28, 1920, titled *The People of the Golden Atom*. The land in the ring is visited again, and there is much intrigue and violence, solved to some extent by the ability of the visitors to become giants at will with the use of drugs.

The submission by A. Merritt of a sixteen thousand-word novelette titled *The Ship of Ishtar* resulted in Bob Davis sending it back on February 21, 1919, with an advance of one hundred and seventy-five dollars and a request to expand it into a novel. He was tired of having to get authors to write novel-length sequels to novelettes on popular demand.

One of the most effective fantastic covers ALL-STORY WEEKLY ever ran was for *Into the Infinite*, by Austin Hall, a six-part, one-hundred-and-twenty-thousand-word sequel to *The Rebel Soul*, purchased for only eight hundred dollars and run in the issues of April 12-May 17. George Witherspoon, who had been possessed by the "Rebel Soul" as described in the story of the same name, continues his nefarious activities, chased around the world by the Master, who hopes to terminate them. Finally the great power of a woman's love gives him the ability to free himself of the "Rebel Soul" and take up a normal life.

Davis changed the title of Homer Eon Flint's story *The Death-Lord* to *The Lord of Death* for the May 10 issue, and paid one hundred and seventy-five dollars for its twenty-two-thousand words, which told of two earth men who travel to Mercury and find a recording of the life of an ancient ruler of that world, including the fact that a man and a woman named Adeam and Ave had escaped in a space ship for a destination unknown to him but obvious to the reader.

The earthmen next take their space ship to the planet Venus and spend most of the story describing in minute detail a "Utopian" civilization in *The Queen of Life* (changed by Bob Davis from *The Life-Queen*). Most men and women live in enclosed, powered, glass cubicles to avoid breathing in germs from others, do so little walking that their legs are atrophying, have all their foods reduced to liquid, and seemed to have attained per-

fection, until a woman discovers a way of having children without men, and then a great mob crushes her.

The second in the Palos trilogy, by J. U. Giesy, titled *Mouthpiece of Zitu*, appeared in five installments July 5—August 2 and received a handsome cover for its opening installment. Jason Croft must convince the people of Palos and Princess Naia, whom he loves, that he is a mortal and the mouthpiece (prophet) of Zitu (God), and therefore a fit mate. There is much intrigue, a wooing that is partly on the astral plane, and the building of airplanes and railroads and the introduction of electricity to help Jason consolidate his supremacy upon this distant world. "Here is imagination carried to the nth power, and a story of equal charm and brilliance," Bob Davis said, but the records show that he paid but five hundred dollars for its seventy-seven thousand words.

The year 1919 was to be the peak year of all time as far as the quantity of fantasy in any one Munsey magazine was concerned. Counting each chapter of a fantastic serial as a unit, together with complete stories, there were ninety-five such units in that year, aggregating roughly about one million words. The average quality, in relation to the era, was very good, and the range of imagination was inspired.

Before the end of the year there would be an additional array of memorable stories by Todd Robbins, Philip M. Fisher, A. Merritt, Max Brand, Charles B. Stilson, Julian Hawthorne, Ray Cummings, Homer Eon Flint, H. Bedford Jones, George Allan England, Austin Hall, and J. U. Giesy.

There was also little question that companion magazine THE ARGOSY was stepping up the pace. From twenty units of fantasy in 1918, they accelerated to thirty-two in 1919, but more important, old Matthew White, Jr., either discovered or turned to fantasy several outstanding figures that had not written that type of fiction previously. Garrett Smith, a NEW YORK TRIBUNE reporter, who had published an excellent novelette *On the Brink of 2,000* (THE ARGOSY, January, 1910, of a device that could see through walls at a distance), submitted a far-out novel, *After a Million Years* (six parts, January 18-February 22), whose theme was epochal. A million years in the future, man, who has migrated to the surface of the planet Jupiter, makes his last stand against nature in a glass-domed city. A torrent of meteorites heralds his end. Garrett Smith became an overnight sensation for readers of THE ARGOSY.

The issue that saw the final installment of Smith's novel introduced Murray Leinster (today still writing, and the dean of science-fiction authors) with *The Runaway Skyscraper*. The Metropolitan Tower in New York City is carried back in lime to a Manhattan overrun by Indians.

The efforts of the workers of a modern skyscraper (still functioning and receiving power through time for its mechanisms) to cope with the situation and return to their own period, created a new reputation. Leinster did the story because, fed up with writing a series of "Happy Village" stories for Matthew White, Jr., he had informed that editor that he was through with mush and was busily engaged in writing a story about what happened when the clock on the Metropolitan Tower began to run backward. White asked to see it, and the rest is history.

Leinster had sold stories to Davis, too, and even attended plotting sessions during which that editor, despite his substantial girth, gyrated about the office, acting out a suggested plot. But Davis, for some reason, had never considered Leinster a likely prospect for science fiction. Leinster's next work of science fiction, *The Mad Planet*, published in THE ARGOSY for June 12, 1920, was to catapult him among the giants in the field, and is undoubtedly one of the greatest of all Munsey scientific romances. His imagination, rich style, and especially his fine characterization of Burl, man of an indefinite future and heir to a nightmare world, who meets and survives terrors that would have caused Tarzan's tanned cheeks to turn ghostly white, brand it as a classic. It has been reprinted repeatedly for fifty years and is destined, together with the equally magnificent sequel, *Red Dust* (THE ARGOSY, April 2, 1921), to be reprinted for another fifty.

The blossoming writer of historical romances, Harold Lamb, told of the finding of the Wosun, a branch of the white race with Christian religion in the Gobi Desert, in a four-part novel, *Marching Sands*, October 25-November 15. Garrett Smith was brought back quickly with a five-part novel, *Between Worlds* (October 11-November 8), of romance and adventure on the planet Venus and the attempt to conquer the earth by introducing Spanish Influenza. Francis Stevens was present with a short story, *The Elf-Trap* (July 5), of a man caught in the spell of a strange woman who seemed part of a tribe of gypsies that were really legendary folk with unusual powers; and a novel, *Avalon* (August 16-September 7), a modern Gothic, of the island of Avalon, owned by an American, with his "castle" on a cliff inhabited by unhealthy relatives. There is the hostility of the islanders to outsiders, a long series of murders, and a shipwrecked party, creating an atmospheric mystery of gloom and doom.

## 18. THE THRILL BOOK

THE TORRENT OF fantastic material appearing in ALL-STORY WEEKLY, its increasing volume in THE ARGOSY, and the fact that both were conspicuously successful weeklies could not help but be noticed by the com-

petition. William Ralston, who had masterminded the publication of the first mystery-story pulp, DETECTIVE STORY, now a weekly success for Street & Smith, felt it might be time for an entire magazine of "different" stories. On the recommendation of W. Adolphe Roberts, editor of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, he hired Harold Hershey for the editorial slot of the new publication. Hershey had met Roberts at the home of Margaret Sanger, and they had in common an interest in birth control. Hershey's editorial experience had been confined to an arty Greenwich Village magazine, THE QUILL and some government publications. He also had the overpowering desire to become a great poet, which was to later bring him to grief.

The magazine was titled THE THRILL BOOK, with the subtitle "A New Type of Magazine for Everybody." Prior to publication, Harold Hershey had printed a two-page "Notice to Writers" in which he set forth the requirements of the magazine:

We are strongly desirous of securing strange, bizarre, occult, mysterious tales—novelettes of ten thousand words containing mystic happenings, weird adventures, feats of leger-de-main, spiritualism, et cetera. . . . If we were to give you a formula we would say—sum up the demands of all other magazines, and then give us good stories which not one of them would take because of their odd qualities and harrowing nature. We quote as examples the stories of De Maupassant, Edgar Allan Poe, De Quincy's curious tales of murder; historical tales of the Inquisition in the style of Hugo; stories of terrible adventures in the spirit world, et cetera. . . . If you have the unusual, the mysterious, the occult, the harrowing—such stories will be gladly considered with a view to publication. . . . We are also in the market for clean, swiftly moving adventure serials, novelettes, and short stories. . . . In this magazine accent is laid on the curious twist; the strange angles of human nature; the coming into contact with an unseen world; miraculous but logical happenings; thrilling occult stories with any background either here or in foreign lands; adventures of extraordinary speed and absorbing interest; mysterious occurrences; spiritual and ghostly narratives; romantically woven novelettes and serials, and whimsical things. If you have an idea which you have considered too bizarre to write, too weird or strange, let us see it.

There have been some who have tried to claim that THE THRILL BOOK was intended to be and was the first science-fiction magazine. This "Notice to Authors," discovered by California science-fiction antiquarian book man and enthusiast Roy A. Squires, lays to rest that notion for all time. Nowhere is the word "science" even mentioned, nor is there a phrase into which "science fiction" could be lilted without greatly stretching interpretation.

The first issue of THE THRILL BOOK was dated March 1, 1919 (it

was a semi-monthly), and Eugene A. Clancy, editor of PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE was assigned to assist Hershey with the technical details of putting a professional magazine together. The first eight issues were in the format of a dime novel (Street & Smith was still publishing many of them), 10% inches high and eight inches wide, saddle-stitched, with forty-eight pages and covers, and selling for ten cents. It had no contents page and no advertisements, and ran editorials on the back cover. By the fourth issue, its fantasy policy had been watered down to this statement by the editor: "It is no doubt clearly understood that a magazine, like newspaper or a national government, must have a policy. . . . THE THRILL BOOK has but one policy—a fundamental one—to *procure the best fiction that is written, no matter what it costs or how hard it is to get.*" In an entire page, not a single word suggestive of the unusual or off-trail was even mentioned.

A large percentage of the stories were off-trail and might have fitted the "different" category of Bob Davis, including several by old Munsey stalwart Perley Poore Sheehan; a number by Greye La Spina, later to become popular in WEIRD TALES magazine; an early story of Seabury Quinn; and a great many by unknown names. With the eighth issue Harold Hershey was fired. Murray Leinster, a close friend of Hershey's, asserts that the main reason he was dismissed was that an inordinate quantity of stories and poems published in THE THRILL BOOK was discovered by Ralston to have been written by Hershey, and some even by his *mother*, under a wide variety of pen names.

Ronald Oliphant was made editor with the ninth issue, July 1, 1919. Oliphant had contributed a three-part serial in verse titled *Alpheus Bings—Thrill Hound*, which ran from the April 15 to the May 15 issue. Oliphant would remain a staff member of Street & Smith, editing TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE in the early thirties.

With the July 1, 1919, issue, the magazine was changed to a regular pulp of 160 pages for fifteen cents, which format it retained until its sixteenth and last issue, October 15, 1919.

Under Oliphant the magazine showed more professionalism, and fantasies were contributed by such Munsey regulars as H. Bedford Jones, Todd Robbins, J. U. Giesy, Junius B. Smith, Francis Stevens, Don Mark Lemon, William Wallace Cook, and Murray Leinster. *Heads of Cerebrus* (August 15-October 15), an unusual novel of Philadelphia of the future, by Francis Stevens, of a culture that is revolted by past events, was probably the high point of the magazine's fantasy-fiction content. Murray Leinster contributed two short novels, *A Thousand Degrees liclow Zero* (July 15), of an attempt to conquer the United States by freezing, and a sequel, *The Silver Menace*, in two parts (September 1-15), in which a

rapidly multiplying growth from the ocean threatens to cover the land. Hershey ordered and paid for a science-fiction novelette by Leinster which Oliphant never published. The title has been forgotten, but three hundred dollars was received for its twenty thousand words, and it concerned an asteroid striking the earth, with subsequent havoc, and included dirigibles of metallic foam.

On October 24, 1919, Ronald Oliphant returned Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Under the Red Flag*, the story which would later be published in ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY as *The Moon Men*. At the time, THE THRILL BOOK had already seen its last issue when publication was stopped because of a printers' strike. Whether Oliphant was aware the magazine would not be resumed when he returned Burroughs' story is not known, but he used THE THRILL BOOK stationery.

In retrospect, it seems that a magazine such as THE THRILL BOOK originally *intended* to be might have succeeded, had it employed a professional editor who understood something about the field. There were plenty of Munsey men around that would have filled the bill. It is obvious that they failed to note that though there were many fantasy and supernatural stories, the big successes in ALL-STORY WEEKLY were the scientific romances, which by now were regularly called "different" stories. What resulted was a fascinating offshoot of the pulp field for fantasy collectors.

## 19. "ARGOSY" AND "ALL-STORY WEEKLY" COMBINE- END OF AN ERA

THE ALL-STORY WEEKLY figuratively roared into 1920 with its ratio of fantasy fiction as high as ever. The year 1919 had closed on a note of triumph, with George Allan England's six-parter, *The Flying Legion* (November 15-December 20), of a giant aircraft (part plane, part dirigible, part helicopter) that takes a group of restless adventurers to Mecca to steal the holy jewels. It was a thriller of a story, with supermen and a superwoman, and a score of devices intended to enthrall the adventure-story lover. The readers' department, which still appeared every issue, showed England second in popularity only to Burroughs in demand; the pay records indicated that Davis had worked to extricate the story from him. The novel, one hundred and seven thousand words in length, was delivered in seven segments; the first was paid for on March 6, 1919, at one hundred and fifty dollars, and the last was paid for May 29, 1919 at eight hundred dollars. All told, England received \$1,750 for his contribution.

Davis had been sweating to get an Edgar Rice Burroughs adventure.

but when *Under the Red Flag* was submitted to him, he rejected it. Burroughs demanded an explanation, and Davis replied on September 17, 1919, "The Pharisees would raise hell with any magazine that resorted to fiction designed to point out obvious truths." The novel, dealing with the occupation of the earth by the Moon Men, was intended to show what life would be like under a communist state.

What Davis didn't know was that Burroughs was having serious trouble at THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE and THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE. Ray Long had left to take the position as editor of COSMOPOLITAN that would make him one of the most exalted and highest-paid editors in the world. Karl Harriman, who had been shoved out of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE when Long was brought in, was now recalled to his old position. Burroughs had been working on his old agreement with Long to produce a series of Tarzan shorts, initially twelve, then cut to ten. Burroughs produced the first six, which ran monthly in THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE from March through August, and was paid a total of \$2,750 for the group. Tarzan spent a lot of his time fighting "krauts" in this set of stories, so vindictively, in fact, that the Germans never forgave Burroughs or Tarzan. He also conclusively killed off his wife, Jane, in the pages of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE. Aside from that, he was writing at the very top of his form and placing Tarzan in some of the most memorable situations. He submitted *Under the Red Flag* to Harriman on August 16, 1919, and before he had received a reply had sent the last of the Tarzan stories asked for under his original agreement with Ray Long, a short novel called *Tarzan and the Valley of Luna*. Harriman rejected *Under the Red Flag* on August 27, 1919, and then on September 19 rejected *Tarzan and the Valley of Luna* under the pretext that he couldn't publish it for eight months.

Burroughs had also attempted to sell Ray Long at COSMOPOLITAN, but having ascended to that high post, Long appeared to have lost all further interest in Tarzan and scientific romances. It now seemed that in placing Tarzan in THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE Burroughs had reached his high-water mark as far as periodicals were concerned. With the unreceptive Harriman, there was nothing more for him at THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE or THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE at least for the time being. Bob Davis and ALL-STORY WEEKLY were now his best hope.

When Davis was offered *Tarzan and the Valley of Luna*, he could scarcely believe his good fortune. Unaware that Burroughs was fresh out of markets, he permitted himself to be held to his old offer of three thousand dollars for a new Tarzan, in this case only fifty thousand words long. The novel was a good one and was broken into live installments, March 20-April 17, 1920. Burroughs changed his mind about killing off Tarzan's wife, and when Tin; RED BOOK MAGAZINE shorts



and *Tarzan and the Valley of Luna* went into hardcover under the title of *Tarzan the Untamed* (A. C. McClurg, 1920), he rewrote the early portion to make her death inconclusive. An unknown civilization and city in the depths of Africa called Kuja was the home base for a good portion of the novel, making it close to science fiction of the lost-race variety.

"It is surely a work of supererogation, like gilding refined gold, painting the lily, or throwing perfume on the violet to write an introduction of any great length to a story by Edgar Rice Burroughs," Davis raved about the Tarzan novel, the first he had bought in many years, it meant his star quarterback was back on an all-star team. There were others who were delighted to see Burroughs back. In the readers' department of the May 15 issue there was a letter enthusiastic about Burroughs and science fiction which was signed O. A. K., undoubtedly a youthful Otis Adelbert Kline, who would in later years make his reputation by imitating Burroughs in *Planet of Peril* and *Prince of Peril*. Another letter in the same issue was asking for issues of ALL-STORY MAGAZINE with the first installment of *Under the Moons of Mars* and *Tarzan of the Apes*. It was Martin B. Gardner, who would from 1936 to 1963 write ten books about Bantan of the islands, a direct pastiche of Tarzan.

The pages of both THE ARGOSY and ALL-STORY WEEKLY had been dropping since 1918, though the ten-cent price remained the same. ALL-STORY WEEKLY had been raised to 192 pages early in 1918 to match THE ARGOSY; then both magazines dropped to 176 with the issues of November 16, 1918. The two magazines simultaneously fell to 160 pages with the December 13, 1919, issues. With the issues of March 27, 1920, there was a simultaneous reduction to 144 pages.

Normally this would be a sure sign of magazine weakness, but during World War I a severe paper shortage had developed. After the war, paper prices rocketed month by month. Printers' strikes increased the cost of production, seemingly endlessly.

Without exception, all the competitors of THE ARGOSY and ALL-STORY WEEKLY had raised their prices. ADVENTURE, THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, and PEOPLE'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE were 192 pages for twenty cents; SHORT STORIES was 176 pages for twenty cents; and TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE was fifteen cents for 192 pages. The last, appealing to a teen-age clientele, was probably afraid to raise the price too high. THE ARGOSY and ALL-STORY WEEKLY were gaining circulation at the expense of the entire adventure field, for only they were still ten cents, but the profit margin was growing smaller.

"The cost of producing and marketing magazines is three times that of a few years ago," Frank A. Munsey opened in one of his famed blue-paper inserts in (he July 17, 1920, issues of his magazines. "Most

magazines have met this increased cost by a heavy advance in the selling price, while we have clung to the ten-cent price for ALL-STORY WEEKLY and THE ARGOSY in spite of the always mounting costs. But the last advance in the price of print paper (the fourth advance within a year) so increased the cost of production that it became a question of advancing the selling price . . . or overcoming the added cost in some other way. . . . Through a consolidation of ALL-STORY WEEKLY and THE ARGOSY, we can save all the cost of stories in one magazine, all the cost of the editorial force, all the cost of typesetting, all the cost of making electrotypes plates, and many other minor costs—an aggregate sufficiently large to enable us to go on a while longer at the old popular price of ten cents a copy, perhaps to go on permanently at ten cents—we hope so."

The new title would be ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY, beginning with the July 24, 1920, issue. The readers' departments of both magazines, "Heart to Heart Talks" in ALL-STORY WEEKLY and "The Log-Book" in THE ARGOSY, had been discontinued in advance of the merger, the last running in the July 3 issues, and they would not be resumed. The first issue of the new ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY had 224 pages to accommodate the serials from both magazines. As the serials concluded, the pages dropped to 192, 176, 160, and finally stabilized at 144 by the year's end, and the price remained the same.

The placing of the name "Argosy" before "All-Story," if it were not sentiment on the part of Frank A. Munsey, since THE ARGOSY reached its one-thousandth number with the March 6, 1920, issue, must have indicated that it was the stronger of the two titles at the time of the combination. There had been little to choose between the two magazines, which had been similar in price and policy. ALL-STORY WEEKLY featured at the time of the combination almost three times as much wordage in fantastic stories, but THE ARGOSY had been increasing the quantity fast, and they were good ones. The major difference was in the cover art. THE ARGOSY was without question one of the most attractive and effective magazines on the stands; the cover painting was neatly framed with a checkerboard border, and the color was excellent. A large percentage of the covers featured women, but they were in action situations—a woman on the deck of a submarine rising from the waves, a woman clinging to a girder of a skyscraper, a woman casting a spear from the deck of a space ship, a woman directing a gang of men building a railroad, and on and on. Such covers attracted both men and women and gave the impression of romantic adventure.

ALL-STORY WEEKLY ran close to one-third of its covers as portraits of a pretty woman's face or a special hair-do, the type of thing seen only on

women's magazines. There were also some very good fantastic covers, but the quantity of portraits gave it the indelible stamp of a love-story magazine, lacking the artistic sophistication of THE ARGOSY in blending its cover appeal to both a male and a female audience. Despite this, both magazines must have gained substantially in circulation as the only general all-fiction pulps selling for ten cents during 1919 and 1920. Frank Luther Mott, in *A History of American Magazines*, Volume 4, cites a figure of five hundred thousand as the circulation of ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY in 1920 at the time of the merger, and then also states: "Its distribution in the twenties held at about four hundred thousand." This seems high, but at the time ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY was a *family* magazine, it remained during most of the twenties the only ten-cent general-fiction magazine, and had a very high entertainment quotient.

The method of the combination, carrying the serials of both by adding pages, was such that it is doubtful that a single nonduplicating reader was lost from either magazine. Certainly the science-fiction lovers were in no mood to leave, with an eight-part novel by A. Merritt, *The Metal Monster*, told by the narrator of *The Moon Pool*, beginning in the August 7, 1920, issue. This 102,000-word *tour de force*, for which Merritt received one thousand dollars, is certainly one of the most remarkable works of science fiction ever written. In the mountains of Turkestan, two Americans are brought face to face with the invasion of a metallic entity from space who, if unchecked, will master the world. It controls metallic objects, which it patterns into geometric designs, and all are but units of one massive organism. In this novel Merritt rises to supreme heights of emotion and poetry as he balances an interplay between humans and cold, unfeeling alienity. His final revision, for reprint in the August, 1941, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, gave the novel a unified philosophical note, beginning with the lines:

In this great crucible of life we call the world—in the vaster one we call the universe—the mysteries lie close packed, uncountable as grains of sand on oceans' shores. They thread gigantic, the star-flung spaces; they creep atomic, beneath the microscope's peering eye. They walk beside us, asking why we are deaf to their crying, blind to their wonder.

And when the metal intelligence, which never could have been destroyed by man, destroys itself, he concludes:

For in that vast crucible of life of which we are so small a part, what other Shapes may even now be rising to submerge us?

In that vast reservoir of force that is the mystery-filled infinite through which we roll, what other shadows may be speeding upon us?

Immediately before the merger, Bob Davis had purchased a collaboration between Austin Hall and Homer Eon Flint, both of whom resided near San Jose, California, titled *The Blind Spot*. Its ninety-eight thousand words had been mailed in and paid for in three segments; the first received a check of three hundred dollars on April 4, 1920, the second a payment of five hundred dollars on June 20, and the final one two hundred dollars on June 23, for a total of one thousand dollars. It would be held for publication almost a year, when it would appear in six installments, May 14-June 18, 1921, and it would be enshrined as a landmark among scientific romances. A strange man emerges from either another dimension or a parallel world and carries back with him a scientist, and then is followed back by other would-be rescuers who learn that the "Blind Spot" is an opening between two worlds. While there is action in that other world, the story is essentially slow-moving, banking on mystery to hold reader attention. It is a mixture of very poor and very good writing, the good most often supplied by Austin Hall and the poor by Homer Eon Flint, and highly praised in its time.

Davis was also negotiating with Burroughs for more Tarzan stories and succeeded in getting *Tarzan the Terrible*, probably the best single story in that series, with the possible exception of *Tarzan of the Apes*. Burroughs got three thousand dollars for one hundred thousand words (apparently he was being paid a flat rate for a novel, regardless of its length) of Tarzan traveling into the unusual civilization of Pal-ul-don, somewhere in Africa, where there exist two human races with tails, some specimens as strong physically as Tarzan himself. Like many of the other Tarzan stories, this is true science fiction, replete with imaginative creatures and unknown civilizations.

It seemed like old times, with Bob Davis and Edgar Rice Burroughs on the same team and a great future in view, when suddenly the roof fell in. A query by Burroughs to Bob Davis was answered by Elliot Bales-tier. Bales-tier had written scores of stories for the Munsey magazines, including a few fantasies, over the past ten years, and had the distinction of being the brother-in-law of Rudyard Kipling, who had married Bales-tier's sister.

"Mr. Davis is no longer with us," the letter, dated December 7, 1920, stated. "He has gone in business for himself with a group of well-known authors whose work he is handling. His address is 229 West 42nd Street, New York City."

It was stunning. When Frank A. Munsey said he would save on slaff by combining the two magazines, no one dreamed that Bob Davis would be the one to go, though logically it wouldn't be Matthew White, Jr., who had been editing THE ARGOSY through all of its ramifications since 1)c

cember, 1886, except for a period when he was sent to Europe by Frank A. Munsey, and his duties assumed by Bob Davis.

Other people involved with the Munsey magazines say that Davis resigned as a result of deep disagreements with other members of the Munsey editorial staff, chief among them R. H. Titlierington, veteran of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. Davis had been handling subsidiary rights for writers as part of a Munsey policy and was well versed in the functions of a literary agent, so his move in that direction made sense.

Burroughs wrote Balestier asking what his status was with the Munsey magazines, now that Davis was gone. He received a reply whose finality was underscored by the lines: "We are overstocked."

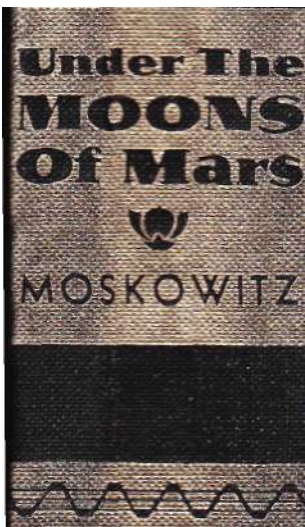
A great era in the development of the Munsey adventure pulps had ended, and a new one was beginning, but the past actions taken by Frank A. Munsey, Robert H. Davis, and Edgar Rice Burroughs were destined to shape the entire history of pulp-magazine publishing and echo in the works of science fiction for its foreseeable future.











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